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ABSTRACT

This collection of papers discusses what researchers and classroom teachers think and do about culture in language education. There are nine chapters in two parts. Part 1, "Culture Theory," includes the following: (1) "Common Themes" (Joseph Lo Bianco); (2) "Culture: Visible, Invisible and Multiple" (Joseph Lo Bianco); and (3) "A Conceptual Framework to Help Teachers Identify Where Culture is Located in Language Use" (Chantal Crozet). Part 2, "Theory in Practice," includes (4) "Chinese" (Li Kaining); (5) "How Can We Make Australian English Meaningful to ESL Learners?" (Anne-Marie Barraja-Rohan); (6) "Teaching French Culture in Language Use" (Chantal Crozet and Louise Maurer); (7) "Are Germans Rude or Just Doing Things Differently? Understanding and Teaching Language and Culture" (Winifred Thielmann); (8) "Face Value: Teaching Italian Verbal and Socio-Cultural Interaction" (Piera Carroli, Adriana Pavone, and Vincenza Tadini); and (9) "The Teaching of Culture in Japanese" (Miyuki Toyoda and Shunichi Ishihara). (Papers contain references.) (SM)

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TEACHING INVISIBLE CULTURE

Classroom Practice and Theory

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Joseph Lo Bianco and Chantal Crozet (Editors)

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Part 1

Culture Theory

Preface

Joseph Lo Bianco

The overall aim of this book is to stimulate experimentation and reflection, leading to improvement in how culture is taught and represented in language classrooms. This aim applies to language teaching in general. The book has a more specific aim as well, which is to provide a practical resource for teachers of Chinese, English, French, German, Italian and Japanese. However, we hope that what is specified for teachers of these languages will be interesting and relevant to teachers of other languages, and indeed for teachers and teaching in general. We also hope that researchers as well as teachers will examine what is claimed in the book, and refine, improve, critique and extend what the book seeks to do.

Despite many limitations, the term "foreign language" (as in foreign language classroom) is used throughout the book. Not everyone supports the wide use of the term "foreign languages" in multicultural countries and especially at a time of globalisation, preferring terms such as modern or community languages instead. Our use of the term is only as a shorthand label to cover the great diversity of language education situations that exist. A brief explanation of these terms is warranted as readers of this book will be in countries that have different ways of describing the teaching of languages other than the official national language.

One option in a book such as this is to continually specify "classical/modern/modern-foreign/heritage/second/foreign/target/additional/immigrant/indigenous" language education, or, even, bilingual/immersion and other program types, in specific contexts. To a small extent we do this, but it has proved unwieldy and overly complicated to follow this practice throughout the book, and therefore more commonly you will find the term "foreign language" used. There is a specific history attached to its use and implications. In the Australian context many educators during the 1960s sought to replace the term "foreign" with the term "modern", as part of wider moves to replace "classical" or "dead" languages in education with living languages of

communication. During the 1970s, when multiculturalism became a major issue, many educators argued that we should discard the term "foreign" altogether (and even the more recent term "modern") and substitute "community" in their place. In Britain it is common to find the terms "modern-foreign" and "community" used to describe categories of languages. There tend to be two types of community language: when it is capitalised, as in "Community languages", the term refers to the official languages of the member states of the European Union; when the term is not capitalised, as in "community languages", it tends to refer to locally spoken immigrant languages. The term "regional minority language", or "regional language", refers to the Celtic languages of Britain. The United States, Canada, New Zealand and other English speaking countries have similarly complex histories of naming groups of languages. For example, what in Australia, Britain and New Zealand are referred to as community languages tend to be called "heritage" languages in the United States.

These histories reflect the social roles of different groups of languages, and have become more prominent in the context of the worldwide phenomenon of migration, and of economic and cultural globalisation. There are also pedagogical implications involved with associating school subjects with communities of speakers who are either far away from learners (foreign) or close to them (community), but these points, while interesting and important in their own right, are a distraction from the main emphasis of the present work, and so we have chosen to stay with the term "foreign language".

Part One of the book, then, comprises two chapters written separately by the editors. Part Two comprises six chapters written by Li Kaining; Anne-Marie Barraja-Rohan; Louise Maurer and Chantal Crozet; Winfried Thielman; Piera Carroli, Adriana Pavone and Vincenza Tudini; and Miyuki Toyoda and Shunichi Ishihara. They address the domain of culture within language teaching programs, as discussed and identified together with the editors, and comprising an ideal that native speakers often identify as their communicative profile. The profile does not refer to syntax, pronunciation or other strictly grammatical elements of language, but rather to culture-infused communication practices. Some elements of this profile which are discussed by the six chapters are verbosity, interpersonal relations in language, rules and practices of politeness, ritualisation and emotions, specifically in relation to Chinese, English, French, German, Italian, and Japanese.

A communicative profile refers to a collection of practices of communication that is idealised by a given speaker community. We are aware of inherent dangers in speaking of a single, or unitary, communicative profile for any given language community, and in fact for some language communities, specifically where the language concerned is spoken by more than one distinct society or nation, there may be more than one communicative profile for that language; and within given nations there may be considerable dialectal variation, though this does not necessarily produce distinctive communicative profiles for each. Essentially, dangers revolve around how to account for variation. Few people in any speech or writing community

adhere totally, or consistently, to the communicative profile of the linguistic community to which they belong, even if they accept its norms. There is considerable artistic, literary and political deviation. This deviation is random or accidental, as well as motivated and deliberate (political, artistic, literary). These two points, the lack of universality, and its violation, do not disprove or discount the existence of communicative profiles of given language communities. Rather, they induce us to take care to define their limits and social functions. Although sometimes violated, the norms of a communicative profile consist of what a community of users of a particular language holds up as its communication values and ideals, especially to outsiders. Understood in this way, culturally infused communication is perhaps the most neglected part of foreign language education today.

Both individuals and groups diverge from the profile of idealised communication practices that we are discussing. Individuals diverge from the communicative profile since language is a kind of personal identity marker. Social groups vary the profile horizontally. Regional and geographic variations vary the profile vertically. There is also contest or challenge against the communicative profiles of particular languages that may be ideologically considered to limit the social or occupational opportunities of individuals and groups. For example, feminist challenges to English communication practices specifically in relation to the conversational turn-taking rules of English, or new policies of the BBC to feature accents other than Southern British English. Despite such social-regional and gender based challenges, we can still say that there is a stable British English communicative profile in relation to notions of politeness, verbosity and the other elements we are discussing.

Individual variation can also be great. So how, given both individual and social variation, can we speak sensibly of a communicative profile while at the same time avoiding the risk of invoking stereotypes? This is a challenge that faces language educators every day. We must account both for patterns and for variation, we cannot collapse patterns into an endless slide of differences. On the other hand we cannot deny variation.

Beyond its political and ideological dimensions a communicative profile is also an abstraction and an idealisation. As an abstraction it considers abstract or broad patterns, not every specific instance of communication. As an idealisation we recognise that many of its users will more or less commonly diverge from its prescription but may still recognise and claim it as a valid representation of that community's practices of communication. A communicative profile serves the ideological function of marking the distinctiveness of a group's communication practices from those of defined others, while its insiders may still contest and vary its rules. To speak of difference requires us to speak of the norm from which practices diverge, from which a difference arises. Teaching foreign languages requires offering learners points of entry into culture teaching, the kind of culture that is noticed and obvious to learners, and which has an impact on a learner's communication needs. In this sense the communicative profile is a guide to the communicative practices that

are widely espoused by, and often encountered in, a target language community, and whose broad patterns are idealised as a representation for outsiders and for children as they mature into full members of a given discourse community.

The main part of the communicative profile that concerns us in this book is that part which it represents to outsiders, as its communicative practice, hence our sense that foreign language is the correct designation. The idealisations that such representations contain suggest cultural expectations that signal teaching points for language in use.

1 Common themes

Joseph Lo Bianco

This book forms part of a wider effort of The National Languages and Literacy Institute of Australia, Language Australia for short, to theorise what we have called Intercultural Language Teaching (ILT). In 1999 we published a still in-demand book called *Striving for the Third Place: intercultural competence through language education*, edited by Lo Bianco, Liddicoat and Crozet; in 2000 we issued two volumes, *Teaching languages, teaching cultures*, by Liddicoat and Crozet and *Integrating culture learning in the languages classroom, a multi-perspective conceptual journey for teachers*, by Papademetre and Scarino.

Thinking carefully about ILT requires us to understand better not simply the connections between culture and language, but also how the notions of language *understanding* and language *knowledge* interact with *behaviour* in that language. At first this may seem like an esoteric concern, but in fact has major practical implications. Past views of culture and its connection to language have tended to view the general behaviours and values of a community as a separate domain from their language knowledge and language understanding. However, this book is based on the clear sense that such a separation is not very helpful to the classroom language teacher. Understanding a foreign language and *knowing* it relate very closely to a speaker's general as well as their linguistic behaviour. This is because the interests, values and social relations among speakers of languages are connected with what they know of the language they speak natively. In other words most of us have a language culture, or a language ideology, as well as a language. The practical effect of this insight for our book is that when a learner studies a new language they are also engaging with the language ideology of its speakers. Encounters between existing speakers of a language and its new learners bring to the fore not just formal linguistic knowledge (grammatical correctness, pronunciation and vocabulary knowledge), but how these are used (behaviour) and what views the "native" speakers have about how it should be used, whether or not they practice these views. A great quantity of

general human relations is mediated by language. This means that learning and using newly or partially acquired languages, brings to the surface language culture among interacting speakers.

These interactions among speakers are very complex, involving at least native >< native, learner >< native, and learner >< learner interactions. Even the most basic language interactions involve language culture and ideology. Native speaker to native speaker interactions in a given society always have elements of language ideology and culture about them. The evidence for this is all around us. For example, we use different terms for cutting down trees depending on whether we are committed greenies or committed wood-chippers, we refer to refugees and asylum seekers differently depending on our views of their rights and the state's behaviour towards them. Our language is always loaded with our views of other people, ourselves and the groups we identify with or belong to, and the beliefs we hold about the world around us. The language relations between a native speaker and a learner tend at first to focus on the language itself, its forms and structure, but as learners acquire more competence in both language and culture, and what they say and write moves on to a greater focus on content rather than form, they engage in increasing uses of the language for expressing themselves and therefore activate a more "natural" language culture/ideology.

For this important reason, in both the language specific chapters as well as in the introductory chapters of the book, we discuss a range of ways to understand connections between culture and language, and offer practical ideas for raising awareness of culture in foreign language programs. Raising awareness of culture involves both direct teaching of culture "as information", as well as teaching of culture "as language", and the teaching of culture "as communication".

The introductory chapters deal with these issues in a general and even in an abstract way. The six language specific chapters take up these general and academic questions in ways relevant to the teaching of Chinese, English, French, German, Italian and Japanese as foreign languages. Although the language-specific chapters address many questions that are particular to the languages concerned, they also address some common themes, including:

Verbosity

Verbosity is a broad term that encompasses a range of specific language behaviours such as the amount of speaking that the particular culture encourages or discourages, the role of silence in that language culture, how the open expression of opinions is regarded, and what limitations there are on topics of discussion, that is, various socially determined constraints on what it is appropriate to say, by whom and when. Most chapters also discuss different social contexts of speech, and some chapters discuss social contexts of writing as well, and the roles of various social actors in relation to speech and writing, and how these contexts and social actors impact on rules and patterns of verbosity.

Interpersonal relations

Interpersonal relations is a term that refers to various devices that different languages institute to regulate how individuals and groups relate in society. These devices include terms of address, both formal and routine greetings, pronominal reference between various social actors, how directness and face are conceived and handled, how consensus and dissension are evaluated, whether and how emotion is displayed, how tactile relations are governed, how hierarchy and egalitarianism are utilised, as well as issues of kinesics (such as facial expression, finger use and various other gestures), posture, eye contact and gaze.

Politeness

Politeness goes far beyond popular notions of not being rude, though of course what counts as rudeness in different cultures varies. The language specific chapters consider the variable uses of thanking, how and when requests are appropriate, justifications, invitations, offers (and their refusal or acceptance), denials and claims, compliments and apologising, omission and hinting, swearing, the use of titles and first names, tone in speech and the role and limits of joking.

Ritualisation

Under this heading the chapters address ceremony, rituals, and the opposite of these, such as the tolerance of eccentricity, and how these are given more or less stable presence in the lives of different language communities.

Classroom activities

Finally, some classroom activities are included. Some are for beginners, while others are for intermediate learners or advanced students. These suggested classroom activities comprise a small section of the chapters but they are an important component as they aim to make productive use of the language and culture connections that have been dealt with in the discussion part of the chapters.

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2 Culture: visible, invisible and multiple

Joseph Lo Bianco

Culture is a complex and elusive concept. We think we know exactly what the term culture means until we start talking to others about it and come across the wide number of meanings of the term. In academic work culture has sometimes been used as a central concept in theories explaining human society and behaviour, but at other times it is almost ignored. In the humanities (literature, art, music, history) reference is often made to culture to explain aspects of human affairs, while in some social sciences (especially in economics, and, until recently, in sociology) culture sometimes doesn't rate a mention. Within a single field of scholarship there can be great variation in how culture is referred to. Even in language teaching there have been major fluctuations in attention to culture. Way back in 1904 the Danish linguist Otto Jespersen (1904) argued that learning about the culture of another society is the highest purpose of language teaching, but for much of the twentieth century language teaching tended to stress grammatical rather than cultural purposes, and it was not until quite recently that the role of culture in language teaching became prominent again.

One clear example of these fluctuating fortunes for the culture concept has been the role of culture in explanations of economic development. Culture was prominent in the extremely influential work of the German sociologist Max Weber (1958; 1979) who in 1904-5 argued that industrial capitalism emerged from the values of certain religious cultures. Weber famously connected "progress", "development" and "modernity" to values, both social and spiritual values, and therefore to culture. However, for a considerable time after Weber, economists and sociologists retreated from his approach, discussing society and economy with only passing reference to culture, believing that culture was poorly defined, too variable and not always "visible", and therefore an unreliable concept to use in analysing societies and their problems. Interestingly, in both economics and political science, analysis of how social norms and rules emerge and are maintained was left to *game theory*.

A milestone in a recent revival of interest in the culture concept was the introduction of the notion of *social capital* (Putnam 1993). Social capital refers to social connections, or networks, institutions and relations in civil society. The greater the quantity of social capital in a given social system the greater the trust and social relations among its members. The notion of social capital has arisen partly as a counter to the notion of human capital, a concept associated with mainstream economics since the late 1940s, but seeking to recover some of the human agency and to retrieve communal relations which are lost in human capital thinking. Social capital has stimulated some recent, if controversial, work in economics and political science that aims to recover Weber's original sense that culture is indeed a viable concept for social scientists to use in explaining economic patterns. A significant recent book, *Culture matters*, (Harrison and Huntington 2000) recalls both the past neglect of culture and its recent resurgence as a central concept in understanding human social and economic patterns.

Social capital lends itself to measurement to the extent that indicators of trust, such as membership of benevolent societies, rates of volunteer service in different societies, involvement in schools and charity work, can be quantified and assessed. These are seen as indicators by those who are committed to using social capital to measure the success of different societies against set norms that comprise a "non-economic" aspect of life that makes possible the social cohesion that permits economic performance. However defined, social capital falls far short of what most people would understand as culture (Falk 2001). The contributors to *Culture matters* aim to convince other economists and political scientists, many of whom study society, history, economy and politics with little reference to culture much less to language, that cultural factors are critical to understanding economics and politics. For example, in explaining why some societies are more prosperous than others, one contributor goes so far as to assert, "culture makes almost all the difference" (Landes 2000: 2).

This new emphasis on the importance of culture is controversial because of its tendency to see culture not simply as a *factor* in explaining different rates of economic progress, but as the main or even sole explanation. For example, in *Cultures count*, Samuel Huntington (2000: xv) contrasts economic data on Ghana with South Korea, finding that the "astonishingly similar" economies of these two very different countries in the 1960s had, by the 1990s, produced dramatically different outcomes: stagnation for Ghana and booming growth for South Korea. Huntington's explanation is that, "South Koreans valued thrift, investment, hard work, education, organization, and discipline. Ghanaians had different values. In short, cultures count". This conclusion will strike many as unconvincing because it seems to exaggerate the role of cultural differences and downplay other factors. While the renewed interest in the cultural aspects of development is a welcome corrective to its past neglect, there is a significant risk that scholarship will lurch to overstating the contribution of cultural variables in explaining social and economic conditions. At its most alarming

it is possible that overstating culture will have the effect of attributing poverty and underdevelopment exclusively to poor people's "cultures", when prevailing political and economic factors are likely to be important.

Perversely, as these economists and political scientists return to arguments similar to Max Weber's in the early part of the 20th century, there are some in the humanities who are making the culture concept disappear. In those human sciences where culture, language and discourse have dominated understandings of social life over recent decades, the culture concept is itself under critical challenge. From the 1970s, the notion of culture has been critiqued by the theory of knowledge coming out of the work of post-structural scholars, especially Jacques Derrida. Culture writing reached a crisis of credibility in some fields of scholarship, even in anthropology. The culture concept came under attack from two other "posts" as well, firstly *post-colonial* writing which launched a critique of "orientalism", in which the western classical study of "oriental cultures" was seen to be associated with and implicated in the practice of political and economic colonisation. *Post-modern* critiques of knowledge de-stabilised the hold of culture too. By interpreting the knowledge creation processes of the traditional academic disciplines and the professions, such as psychology, history and anthropology, as constructing partial, and interested, truths, rather than uncovering pre-existing and independent Truth, post-modernism claimed to show that academic knowledge was also bound up in relations of domination. From both these sources the concept of culture has been punished in a great deal of academic writing. As a result a large number of "critical" scholars have aimed to expose the use of culture in western social thought as an essentialised construct, a kind of primordial, or formative concept, rather than what they allege it is, a constructed, and therefore dynamic and multiple concept.

For critical scholars when culture is not banished altogether, it is used to mean flexible, varying, and internally contested practices, rather than a monolithic unchanging entity. This political rejection of culture, due to claims that it is complicit with power and domination, has weakened its hold in some parts of academic life. The renewed interest in culture from economists and political scientists, and the exaggerated claims made for culture's effects, is precisely the kind of basis on which it is rejected by critical scholarship. In an influential contribution along these lines James Clifford (1988; 1992) suggested that the culture concept had outlived its usefulness and should be discarded altogether. Similarly, the constitutional scholar James Tully (1997) sees classical views of culture as "no longer acceptable", because cultures are not "separate, bounded and internally uniform" but "overlapping, interactive and internally negotiated" (p 10).

The critique of the role of "culture study" in the advancement of European colonialisation, most famously advanced by Edward Said (1994), showed that cultural products and assumptions accompanied imperial expansion and reinforced its operation. Today, similar voices decry language, alleging that the very idea of languages as bounded, secure and stable entities called this or that name, are a

"colonial invention" or a "European imposition". This view is strongly advanced by some African theorists who want to "disinvent" language, preferring to see in its place interlinked and overlapping communication chains. Such communication chains are not associated necessarily with states, nor with bounded and exclusive histories, and not with cultures. Such scholars find "language" an amorphous invention.

Some have argued that people's mother tongue is "multilingualism" since they grow up and continue using a multitude of varieties all their lives, and these intermingle continually. Just like culture and social identity are socially constructed rather than given, highly variable rather than stable, they are in the end performances of different identity roles selected from repertoires of identity-forming practices that their social circumstances make available to them.

It is not likely that either language or culture will be "disinvented". The notions will survive in both popular and technical analysis, but it is important to acknowledge the critiques since they point out damaging effects of transferring notions of culture and language relevant to particular historical experiences applied to analysis and action in radically different social contexts. It is also important to recognise that exaggerated claims and historical abuse of terms like culture and language have introduced into societies with radically different understandings of communication and identity practices, forms of knowledge that are often alien to their actual experience. Revision to imperialist thinking that constitutes the colonised as inevitable victims, however, sees culture and language as dynamic sites of resistance of powerful colonisers, thereby finding flaws in the notions of imposition and domination of earlier post-colonial thinking, while still accepting the unequal nature of such encounters.

In short, there are radically different ways to understand culture. Some make culture prominent in society; others make it invisible. Some find culture liberating; others see it as repressive. Some attribute actual economic and social conditions to culture, others who study economy and society find little place for culture in their explanations of societies or economies and their relative performance in a competitive world. Just like culture has varied so has "culture study", sometimes being used or associated with views that make all human groupings equal and interesting, at other times used to rank and evaluate progress and development. While the culture concept is clearly important in human social groupings, it is also a complex and difficult concept that requires specification.

Understandings of culture

Part of the explanation for why there have been swings in the prominence devoted to culture in understanding society come about because of widely different meanings and uses attributed to the notion. To explore this I focus below on some 140 years of Anglo-American thinking about the culture concept to underline the radical changes. This selection, and this time frame, does not account for other intellectual traditions, and different time scales, where the notion of culture may have gone through different or more extensive revisions and representations. The list below dramatises these changes. Over a relatively short time the term culture has meant: personal improvement via encounter with the civilising arts, exotic difference, an essential tool for understanding everyday society (the ordinary), non-evaluative signs of difference (the semiotic), transitory and non-bounded identity (travel), action (a verb), communities framed in discourse and social practice, and ways of dealing with outsiders. Not all of these are definitions as such, but all of them suggest variations in meaning.

MATHEW ARNOLD	"...contact with the best which has been thought and said ..."
EDWARD TYLER	The exotic
RAYMOND WILLIAMS	The ordinary
CLIFFORD GEERTZ	The semiotic
JAMES CLIFFORD	Travel
BRIAN STREET	A verb
CLAIRE KRAMSCH	"...linguistically mediated membership into a discourse community..."
ANNE FREADMAN	Cultures anticipate intercultural encounter

Mathew Arnold

Matthew Arnold was an inspector of schools, a poet, literary critic and influential educational reformer. In a famous formulation from an 1868 book, *Culture and anarchy*, Arnold described culture as "contact with the best which has been thought and said in the world" (Wilson 1935). Arnold's definition continues a classical European stream of thinking that associated culture with civilisation, and its opposite as "barbarism" and social or political anarchy. Arnold's specific rendering linked culture to the existence of a healthy democratic state. In this normative formulation the presence of culture, or the encounter that education provides with culture, distinguishes a civilised state of personal and social existence from political upheaval and personal dissolution. In Arnold's thinking culture was intimately connected to "perfection", "beauty" and "intelligence", which he saw residing in great and permanently valuable works of art and literature. Encounter with these elevated values from the civilised

classical past invoked the potential for educational improvement in the here and now. Arnold imagined these qualities residing in many traditions in the world, believing that all human societies expressed elevated qualities of refinement and perfection through the arts.

The Arnoldian legacy found expression in classical foreign language education in which the written was privileged over the spoken, the past over the contemporary. This view of culture is also resurgent today in revived notions of a literary canon in which prestige literature is elevated as the highest purpose of studying languages, and is seen as universal, and improving. A foreign language curriculum aiming at intercultural education influenced by Arnold's views of culture would identify in some "impartial" way the most excellent and prized literary examples of the language, would select only these to be taught, and would insist that these would be the correct norms of the language, forming an overall model that students should aspire to emulate. These texts would tell us about the culture, and learners would interact with that representation of the culture, and not with its presumably defective daily manifestations.

Edward Tyler

A major departure from Arnold's civilising purpose of culture through refined arts was already underway during his own lifetime and in his own neighbourhood. In 1872 Edward Tyler, in collaboration with the British Association for the Advancement of Science, devised what was to later become a standard tool for anthropologists in their search for understandings of culture. Although in the science of the ethnographic description of peoples Tyler's ideas would evolve and eventually disappear, his work did inaugurate a significant move away from Arnold's normative, to a more descriptive, notion of culture. Tyler attempted to devise a technical listing of the totality, or at least the significant majority, of distinct cultures. The aim was to produce an exhaustive and universally valid list of the content of cultures; essentially a technical checklist of all the items, practices and behaviours that could be considered "cultural".

In the hands of museums, collectors of exotica, adventurers, surveyors and colonisers, this list, or its various refinements, were useful instruments for mapping the traits of particular ethnic groups. The idea of an inventory of culture was also a very practical instrument for conducting comparative scholarly research by isolating particular practices (such as hand-tools, cannibalism, marriage rituals, jewellery, food production) across different ethnic or tribal groups, noting similarities and differences. As the British Empire expanded during the 19th century and the early decades of the 20th century, it made increasing and deeper contact with peoples unfamiliar to its scientists, explorers and traders. Inventories of cultural categories served purposes of both scholarship and management of peoples who came under the sway of Britain's vast global reach.

The earliest inventories consisted of items or topics that an amateur as well as

a professional would apply in describing a tribe, or other grouping. These listings evolved into fully-fledged field manuals for scientifically oriented anthropological research and reached their highest degree of technical refinement in the burgeoning science and practice of anthropological fieldwork emanating from North American universities, philanthropic trusts and museums. Perhaps the most comprehensive example of these field manuals was the *Outline of cultural materials* first published in the late 1930s. From Tyler's forerunner, whose initial categories seemed to focus on the most exotic kinds of difference to satisfy home curiosity about other peoples, emerged much vaster and more complex maps of description resembling encyclopaedic catalogues. Some versions of these are used today to structure and guide academic research, and to assist public museums, private collections and amateurs in systematically describing, listing and representing cultural data for the whole world, for particular nations, or for specific geographic areas. Typically these involve hierarchies in which certain fields of interest are set out in extended tables with nested categories (e.g., Food Seeking: gathering, hunting, fishing, agriculture, etc).

Although these lists make possible cross-cultural analysis of topics, and cultural characteristics, they reflect an enduring tradition of thinking about culture that is quite different from the idea expressed by Arnold, and the ancient tradition that he was representing. In effect this new practice associated culture with the lives and behaviours of other people and often constituted them as "exotic" and irremediably "different". One enduring effect of this practice of documentary examination of the minutiae of others' worlds was to identify culture itself as "that which distinguishes" others from ourselves, us from them. In turn this made the viewpoint and behavioural norms of the observer *invisible*, rendering it as a natural or normal point from which others are scrutinised, and the practices, lifestyles and values of the observed, *overly visible*. In other words, observation was erased, and rendered not as a standpoint, but as the norm.

Foreign language approaches shaped by the more extreme of the Tylerist approaches would have the cultural items of the curriculum identified possibly as a listing of objects of difference that learners would examine as essentially different from themselves, perhaps after developing proficiency in the target language.

Raymond Williams

The dismantling of this naturalising gaze of the western observer has a long and complex history, but in relation to culture a major contributor was Raymond Williams (1958), a British literary and social critic. Williams turned the gaze of the scientist, and used the tool of culture, to an examination of his own society, not other people's. In Williams' work culture was neither "high art and civilising thought", as it had essentially been for Arnold, nor the "exotic and the different", as it became in early ethnographies influenced by Tyler. Williams' radical re-casting of the culture concept was to define culture as that which is *ordinary*. Treating as cultural that which is

taken for granted, that which is unremarked, seen as normal or natural, is to give the culture concept a radical alternative dimension. The impact of this thinking was to distance discussions of culture from notions of civilisation but also from the understanding that only others possess and are characterised by culture. Under the influence of both the Arnoldian and Tylerist approaches, much culture writing had had this effect, if not this precise intention, of "othering".

Both the Arnold and Tyler views of culture invoked distance and separation whereas Williams was concerned with here-and-now realities. In the Arnoldian perspective societies and individuals revered culture when it was art or literature of the past, and came to use achievements of past culture to evaluate and judge the present. An effect, if not the intention, of Tylerist descriptions and their orientation towards exotica, was to amuse, divert, and entertain and, sometimes, to "persuade" dominant societies of their "superiority". Observers' ways of being came to constitute the natural state of things from which other practices were rendered as deviations, or the diverting qualities of distant others. Over time Williams' view that "culture is ordinary" brought about two crucially important shifts. The first moved away from seeing culture as something that only "primitive" and non-European others possessed. The second moved culture away from elite art and thought in the European past (or those past civilisations of non-Europeans that Europeans admired). The collective effect of these two changes were that everyday lived experience, or mundane reality (the here-and-now of everybody), could be interpreted as cultural, as practices able to be examined and understood in a systematic way as cultural life.

Transferring the focus of attention away from others and away from past time, to all or any human society and to present time, has been decisive in opening up the possibility of intercultural encounters, and intercultural communication, based on reciprocal exchanges across legitimate and stable differences. Thinking about culture in the ways suggested by Williams also leads to an interest in the internal understandings, purposes and meanings of any aspect of social life. In particular, this view induces us to examine the expressive practices of any collectivity of humans that constitutes itself as a coherent entity influenced by internal accounts of its experiences. Any such entity will have its own institutions, its distinctive arts and learning, its valued practices and its typical, or mundane/taken-for-granted routines. It follows from this approach that cultural meanings are always "reasonable" and understandable to the group. This view supports the "emic" and "etic" distinctions (insider and outsider understandings of experience) that was already well formed in the study of other societies by field work ethnographies that had become the dominant approach of professional anthropology, but, partly influenced by Williams, was extended into all societies and social groupings.

Williams' focus on the ordinary processes of human societies and minds also opened up new ways to see change, as well as continuity, in culture. The known meanings, that is the stability in culture, and the ways these are transmitted to those introduced to the culture (the young and the stranger) always undergo change. This

is readily observable in most cultures, though some tolerate change more robustly than others, and is one of the reasons why the empirically oriented social sciences had shunned culture in the past, feeling that its tendency to change makes it unreliable in explaining phenomena. Williams also studied cultural change in terms of the challenges and contests that cultures are subjected to, from both inside and outside forces. This additional contribution, conceiving culture as having creative and dynamic elements centrally within them, as well as their tendency to assert, invoke and stabilise tradition and anti-change, makes the notion of culture more robust and vital. Seeing culture as both traditional and dynamic allows a reconciliation of the common/ordinary with the elite and the hierarchically dominant elements, since it is the shifting boundaries of this distinction, among others, that introduces change and its opposition.

Foreign language education influenced by Williams' contributions would have us approach the daily lives and interests of the learners and those they encounter in the foreign culture as cultural dialogue.

Clifford Geertz

From an explicit anthropological angle Clifford Geertz (1973) sees culture descriptively and approaches the study of human societies from a primary assumption that differences are normal, natural and inevitable. Best known for his research fieldwork in Java, Geertz greatly influenced the way the symbolic domain, as "systems of meaning" is related to culture. Geertz (1973) also refers to the vast array of meanings attached to the word culture, nominating the 160 different definitions in Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1952), and Kluckhohn's (1949) *Mirror for man*, which discusses twelve meanings. If nothing else these are testament to the remarkable intellectual productivity of anthropological investigations during the seven decades of the twentieth century up to Geertz's time of writing. This huge diversity is in evidence even in the following small sample:

- The total way of life of a people;
- The social inheritance the individual accumulates from the group;
- A repository of "pooled learning";
- "...Standardised orientations to recurrent problems";
- "...learned behaviour";
- "A mechanism for the normative regulation of behaviour".

One hundred and sixty operating definitions of culture and their organisation under twelve overarching understandings are extensive enough, but in Kroeber and Kluckhohn's (1952) review these are located under several overarching approaches. Simplifying considerably these approaches and their typical or classical areas of focus in anthropological investigation were:

- **Topical Approaches** which see culture as categories, e.g., religion, food seeking, tools or economic systems;
- **Historical Approaches** which see culture as tradition, or heritage, that is passed on intergenerationally;

- **Behavioural Approaches** which see culture as learned and shared behaviour;
- **Normative Approaches** which see culture as ideals and rules for the ordering of living;
- **Functional Approaches** which see culture as environmental problem-solving or as adaptive behaviour;
- **Mental Approaches** which see culture as learned habits that inhibit biologically inherited and animal impulsiveness;
- **Structural Approaches** which see culture as patterns of symbols, or ideas, and practices;
- **Symbolic Approaches** which see culture as arbitrary but socially shared meanings.

In response to this forbidding complexity Geertz puts forward a semiotic view of culture, perhaps most in keeping with the final approach nominated above: "that man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun, I take culture to be those webs, and the analysis of it [...] an interpretative ... search of meaning..." (1973: 4-5).

This symbolic or semiotic emphasis in Geertz's approach as a field anthropologist working in societies very different from his own, provides noticeable continuity with Williams' approach, as the literary and social critic studying his own society, and even with Weber's sociology in which he analyses the "spirit of capitalism" in his own and other societies. Partly it is Geertz's method of analysis, specifically of life in Java, which links these very different enterprises. Geertz describes these connections as follows: the literary critic looks for the "social ground and import" that support "structures of signification" for its readers and writers; the anthropologist looks for the "social ground and import" that support meaning in a given culture, and the sociologist may do the same for societal institutions and processes. This way of seeing all human action as laden with symbolic meaning, i.e., as deeply semiotic, provides a matrix that includes and joins together patterned behaviour in areas as diverse as music, speech or painting. What is crucial for Geertz is the significance of behaviour, its meaning in the crucial area of public acts, as distinct from private worlds. In these public acts are signs that are understandable only within the "imaginative universe" of a collectivity.

The definitions and approaches indicated above seek to accommodate and reconcile the vast range of human social life that is not genetically transmitted or programmed, but is socially produced and learned. This refers to the widely agreed boundary between culture and nature. Human social life that is learned, and not acquired or transmitted genetically, is itself an unstable boundary however. Hair colour, for example, is transmitted genetically but this inheritance is constantly "interfered with", for example, by tinting, styling, colouring, straightening and so on. In this way humans modify what is inherited. Some do it to keep the impression of age at bay, others to "look" a particular way, even adopting the "look" of a culture radically unlike the one whose inheritance the individual actually has. Similarly, the

desire for food may be triggered physiologically by the human genetic code, but in our evolved social life eating can hardly be limited to "feeding". This inheritance is also "interfered with", in that we modify foods, both scientifically and culturally (and now increasingly genetically too). These two examples show that while the nature/culture boundary is valid as a way to decide what isn't cultural, in practical terms, in daily life, nature and culture are in constant interaction and the actual boundaries between them are often blurred. Geertz's focus on the semiotic gives culture a domain that is unique to human life and in no way natural.

In foreign language teaching influenced by semiotic systems we would focus attention on worldview and experience as it is interpreted, its signs and their meanings, by people learners interact with rather than "out-there" objects or practices.

James Clifford

Taking up the nature/culture divide from a radical angle is James Clifford, a critic of the social effects and uses of the culture concept. In his studies of literature, history and anthropology he comes to the concept of culture from perspectives that stress unstable change, or even stable change, but certainly change in preference to seeing in culture qualities of stability and tradition. In this process Clifford pinpoints the emergence and passing away of cultures. Based on the many problems Clifford sees in the culture concept he argues for a "rethink" of both culture and "its science" of anthropology.

Central to Clifford's approach is the notion of "travel", and especially the effects on culture of the movement (both actual and symbolic) that travel implies. Travel has been longstanding and is pervasive. Emphasising that culture is always built up in human interaction, that it is constantly being made and re-made, he argues "the organic naturalizing bias of the term culture — seen as a rooted body that grows, lives, dies etc. — is questioned." (1992:101)

Challenging culture in this way Clifford also points out that what has passed as cultural practice in most settings has a disputed history, is often under challenge within its own domains and in any case comes to observers and outsiders as part of a package of interests and specific circumstances. To counter these tendencies in the notion of culture, the tendency to lay too much stress on culture as a stable and homogenous entity, Clifford stresses displacement rather than rootedness, and interaction rather than transmission.

In 1992 Clifford argued that everyone is "more or less permanently in transit" and therefore we might more correctly enquire of people we meet "where are you between" rather than "where are you from" (p109). Surveying the history of the term and its use in travel writing, collecting, art, ethnography, and museums Clifford raised questions about how "we" could understand "others" after the predicament of culture, that is, the exposure of the term culture to massive critique had rendered it so problematic. Along these lines of arguing he also takes issue with policies

and practices of cultural protectionism, whereby the spread of English, Coca Cola or other objects and items of modernisation are taken to be inevitably "tragic" and destructive of "traditions" when they might just as easily be interpreted as expressive of contemporary realities of movement, of hybrid connections of culture, of new forms of culture. The travel-based notion of culture understands that hybridity rather than fixed and traditional notions of culture and identity is typical. Movement and change, dynamism and creativity, are core ideas if the perspective is not one making culture natural, but seeing it as the outgrowth of interactions, which, in the globalising, internationalising world involve ever greater rates of encounter across differences.

Infusing foreign language education with the consequences of Clifford's view of culture would radically challenge what constitutes culture. While we may not entirely discard castles, traditional food, or costumes as representative of the culture whose language we are studying we would not treat these as central expressions of what is distinctive of the culture. In fact we might do away with any notion of what is distinctive at all, and emphasise hybrid mixtures and combinations of new and dynamic culture, the learner with the speaker interacting not about "essential" differences between them, but about common interests and connections, producing new and original mixtures of cultural forms in the moments of their interaction. What emerges from interactions between and across groups would require us to accept and incorporate cultural change centrally within foreign language teaching.

Brian Street

Working with not dis-similar understandings is Brian Street (1993). A major theme in the work of Street is the socially contingent basis of literacy and language, culture as a practice, or a set of practices, things we *do* rather than things we *are*. To emphasise this quality of activity, of practices, Street describes culture as a verb. Seeing culture as a verb, a *doing* word, a word that makes things happen, involves focusing on how language is a process of enacting the resources of meaning and signification that are available to those who are part of the language and culture system. This means, therefore, that language is a network of shared meanings. A collectivity that shares a language has available to it this network of common meanings from which particular sub-groups select according to the specific intentions and characteristics of that sub-group, or that individual in given circumstances. Since different sub-groups enact different selections from the available meaning resources of the language-culture group, (retaining intelligibility to the whole collectivity, but stressing the priorities, interests and experiences specific to the sub-category) Street's contribution to our discussion here allows us to marry change with stability.

Change in culture is usually brought about first via language, just as tradition is usually enacted by the language system. Street's main interest is literacy, rather than spoken language, and in the study of literacy practices of different societies he identifies "literacy events" as well as "practices" of literacy that are distinctive. His work is within a body of thinking that takes emphasis away from seeing culture as

an "essential" and defining property of humans, and stresses that it is constructed in human interactions. However in Street's case we have a greater emphasis on culture itself as *doing*, enactment, in each literacy event and practice, and therefore a very dynamic vision that accommodates the hybrid ideas of "travel" and "movement" but also acknowledges continuation and stability.

A foreign language practice aiming to highlight culture and informed by Street's ideas would see the talk and interaction of doing communication itself as revealing and producing of culture.

Claire Kramersch

Claire Kramersch defines the three elements of our concerns in this volume directly: *culture* as learned, transmitted, changing but also stable activities of the groups we belong to and identify with; *languages* as the central vehicles of culture, one of culture's most pervasive accomplishments, since all members of a culture interact with language, when they may not interact with all the other institutions of a culture, such as high art; and *teaching* as the formal processes of transmission of cultural knowledge, through second language learning, to cultural outsiders. Kramersch's approach is to connect culture to language directly, as always being "...linguistically mediated membership into a discourse community that is both real and imagined..." and as being constituted along three dimensions, "... the diachronic axis of time, the synchronic axis of space, and the metaphoric axis of the imagination" (1995: 85). In this way Kramersch connects the previous discussion of culture definitions directly to our present concerns in foreign language teaching. This synthesis of time, space, and the imagination with discourse serves well our present purpose of setting the scene for language specific discussions of language, culture and education. Kramersch's definition warrants elaboration.

First she refers to "linguistically mediated membership into a discourse community that is both real and imagined". This part of the definition points to the critical role of language in effecting or enacting membership of a culture. We learn and are continually reminded of our membership of a culture through language in a wide range of language elements, including its ways of talking, but also its products, such as its high literature, folk stories, and myths. Language also narrates our culture's key events to us as we are continually told and re-told so that we come to imagine and feel our membership of groups and attachment to individuals who form part of "our culture" but whom we will never meet and know. Widened, this process connects us to attachments of national belonging (Bhabha 1990). This process helps to constitute us as belonging to a "discourse community", a community whose members have continually discussed many things (common experiences formed into history, politics, rights, disputes, problems, and opportunities) together. We have been having conversations within our group about our common relations, and ourselves, with outsiders, longer and more densely and deeply than we have had with others.

Second, Kramersch points to the "real and imagined". This is an important

elaboration of the idea (Anderson 1991) that our community is at the same time *actual* and *imagined*. Our actual community is bound by webs of interdependence, in common territory and space, landscape and cities, geography and so on, as well as common actual social realities (our government, entertainment, heroes and anti-heroes, history both shared and disputed). Our *imagined* community refers to the literary, idealised, mythic, and all other-worldly dimensions of our identities with people we say are part of our culture but whom we do not know and may not ever meet.

The final three points in Kramsch's definition reinforce these understandings, by referring us to space, time and imagination. Time reminds us that history, both official and unofficial, and memory are parts of belonging to a community, and language is the medium through which we are connected to this "diachronic axis", this angle of time. Space reminds us that we share living space, meaning geography, cities, countryside, landscape, physical environment together, and while we experience this directly we speak and read and write about it too, and so language is the medium of this part of our culture as well. This is the "synchronic axis", the here and now. Imagination reminds us that the world of culture is also a mental world, an ideational world, where ideas, ideologies and thoughts, all communicated and discussed, or related and told, mediated of course by language, are indispensable to our culture. We encounter these in the "metaphoric axis" where they stand for identity.

It follows from Kramsch's approach that "Culture in language learning is not an expendable fifth skill, tacked on, so to speak, to the teaching of speaking, listening, reading, and writing" (1993:1). In this approach we seek to infuse cultural understanding and knowledge centrally within all foreign language teaching.

Anne Freadman

The variety in definitions of culture underscores both why culture is so central to understanding human social life, and why it has been so difficult for a stable pattern of use of the notion to appear. This focus makes us think that in intercultural education, in foreign language classrooms, there is a problem of "representation". Representation refers to what we present to the learner as the culture of the language they are learning. Given the vastness of the culture and the needs of beginners, or even advanced learners, the representation must be a selection from all that is possible.

Noting this, it would be wise to consider Anne Freadman's (2001) insistence that when we represent a culture we are engaged in three interconnected activities; a **rhetorical** process (we construct and act out that culture in how we say it exists, for the learner, in a range of genres of representation); each of these generic ways of representing the culture is **interpretive** (culture, the process of interculturalism, and learning about other cultures, are identified in different ways); and **advocacy** (in subtle, and not always subtle ways, we are engaged in moments and acts of serving interests). Freadman cautions that since in intercultural study we rely on

representation, we are faced with selecting between whether cultures are systems that contain closure or "the dynamic of semiosis" (p. 293).

Cultures are always dealing with that which is familiar and that which is strange, the experience of insiders and outsiders. The familiar is the routine for insiders. The strange comes from challenge, or contest, promoted by change-minded insiders, or change-minded outsiders, the curious or the novice. The familiar is inductively but also explicitly taught to the young as they grow into membership of the adult version of the culture. The familiar is also made available, or denied, to the outsider, as he or she, mostly explicitly but also inductively, encounters and learns to operate within the culture.

By this understanding the intercultural is also at the heart of a culture, whether it involves the activity of extending the cultural range of the young so that they grow to embrace the adult cultural norms, or to the foreigner as he or she comes to encounter, learn, and operate competently, within the culture's pattern for relating to foreigners. Importantly this power of extending the competence for insider-like operation to outsiders, and to the young insiders, can also be denied. Freedman stresses that although foreign experts (such as non-native anthropologists, teachers, or sociologists) *know* the culture, they know it in the formal ways they represent it. On the other hand the internal insider is also informed and reasonable, but does not depend on formal expertise or on outsider interpretation. This is another way that culture will vary. Even the same culture will be represented according to the varying perspectives of insiders and outsiders.

From Freedman's work foreign language syllabus design, which aims to infuse cultural perspectives, will be sensitive to perspectives such as these, and will be aware and perhaps restrain its rhetoric as it, perhaps inevitably, engages in representation, interpretation and advocacy.

Summary

The language concept is vital to helping us reconcile the great variation in definitions and approaches to culture noted above. Not only are the many approaches to defining culture attempting to encompass a vast range of activity, but culture is itself an activity that varies over time and place. Some characteristics of culture are universal (it is learned and shared, meaning that culture is always a collective activity). But culture is also moving, unstable, and variable. It is challenged from within and modified from without. How can the theories of culture that have been identified account for this quality of culture? The definitions of culture we have considered, no matter how they differ, tend to agree that culture is not random, or idiosyncratic, or wholly personal, but that however we define culture, the entity we are defining refers to behaviour that is patterned, learned, and social, but also changing, and constructed, sometimes "in the moment" as hybrid compromises of values are produced, such as in interaction between people of widely varying backgrounds interacting with each other.

Language is a cultural behaviour that shares these qualities. It is learned, in that each cultural community teaches its language to its young, but it is also inherited as a propensity; all human young are predisposed to learn language and come "ready-built" with the mental and physiological mechanisms for acquisition. In addition, few cultures, and few languages, are "intact systems", but have been influenced by other linguistic and cultural systems, and in turn influence them, some more powerfully than others. Language is unique, however, among all cultural systems, in that it not only reflects the experiences and values of the culture that it gives expression to, but it also plays a major role in forming culture. It is through language, not exclusively but predominantly, that any cultural system is preserved and transmitted, and it is through language that change is negotiated and incorporated into cultural systems.

Because culture is learned, in studying culture we must give central place to communication, and therefore to language, and to processes of transmission (socialisation, inculcation and teaching). In Williams' formulation language contains three layers of culture. The first is the archaic past (tradition). The second is the present use of language (acting in the here and now). The third is the emergent future (how in language we make possible the future and bring about change to culture). Culture through language is more often discussed in relation to how the young of a culture are inculcated into that culture. This usually happens in families, which are the locus of what is called primary socialisation, and schooling, in what is usually termed secondary socialisation. The key but not sole tool in both kinds of socialisation is communication, and therefore language. However, as Freedman stresses, cultures are not only taught from within to the young, in either primary or secondary socialisation. They are also taught to outsiders, and here too communication practices, especially language as foreign languages, are crucial. In some of that teaching the culture is taught explicitly, as content, to the new learner. But a great deal of that culture is invisible. In much of the culture that a new learner, an outsider, acquires, insiders barely notice that it is cultural behaviour in any case.

The survey of changes in how culture is defined and understood indicate that as people have paid attention to culture over the past 140 years they are prone to conclude that culture is "always there". It follows that in teaching languages we should accommodate to the omnipresence of culture, and this is, of course, the conclusion of many researchers and teachers over recent years.

In practice, however, culture is often absent from the foreign language classroom. Teaching languages focuses only on the "insides" of language, such as grammar, words and rules, and not its "outside", society and culture, of which culture is always a part. The "insides" are represented (interpreted, advocated) as being without culture but we have learned that this could hardly be the case.

What we learn most clearly from the transition of views and definitions of culture is a struggle to represent what culture is, what it does and what holds together practices that are similar but not identical. This survey of only some of the rather dramatic developments in thinking about culture, limited because it is taken

only from Anglo-American formulations, already shows a multitude of perspectives. It reveals the influence of political ideology, the needs of science (anthropology), and prevailing social values. Matching these changes since the mid 19th century has been an even more intense and more rapid evolution just in the last decade.

Reviewing the 1990s elaboration of thinking about culture in foreign language education, Kramsch (2002) has recently proposed a "new view" of the nexus between culture and language. She expresses this by quoting two characters in Salman Rushdie's novel, *The ground beneath her feet* (1998), in which in the culturally multiple and mixed urban context of India, Vina and Ormus "tailor" their own culture, making what society, history and tradition supply "fit". Rushdie allows that for most people "our personae" are taken from the models our social circumstances provide us. Vina and Ormus, however, through the mediating agency of music, "insisted" on adapting these available models, to make them fit, and produced *auto-couture*. *Auto-couture* combines the Latin of self (as agency), and *couture*, the French for fashion. In recalling high fashion, clothes and style, designer labels and big-name fashionistas, Rushdie invokes how individuals change themselves, all the while acknowledging that cultural change is imbricated with the pre-existing social milieu. Cultural change may occur within what is supplied, valued and presented by society, that which the prevailing culture makes available, its models as it were, but its adoption, or even its rejection, is not for this any less real or dramatic, or lacking in agency.

Culture in foreign language teaching

The problem of culture in language teaching is felt everywhere languages are taught. To take only two recent examples, the 2002 Conference of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages was devoted entirely to this issue, and from Singapore, Ramona Tang, a learner of German, comments:

From my (admittedly limited) experience with foreign language education, it would appear that the question of "culture" is often relegated to the end of a language teaching plan. It seems as if it is always something of a bonus if the teacher manages to find time to introduce a bit of the culture of the foreign language into the classroom — some music perhaps, or a traditional dance, in the final lesson of the course. If learners are particularly lucky, they get a chance to spend a month in the foreign country to "immerse" themselves in the "culture" of the country. But is that one class session enough? Is one month enough? Is it necessary? (Tang 1999).

Tang goes on to call for a much more integrated connection between language and culture teaching, and that, precisely, is one of the goals of this book. Our aims here are ambitious, seeking to bring together linguistics, culture studies and teaching especially in the light of the deep changes in these fields discussed above. Linguistics often ignores culture, inter-cultural study often ignores language, and both linguistics and inter-culturalism often ignore teaching.

In this book we are trying to do more than discuss these diverse and often not integrated fields together. We are attempting to do this in a way that is both systematic and practical. We are concerned about providing language teachers with reflections about culture, and about language, but especially about language and culture in interaction, aimed at effective and productive teaching.

Beliefs about languages, our own languages and those of others, reveal a great deal about language learning and behaviour. The praises that speakers heap on their languages indicate what qualities different groups of people claim and value (precision, elegance, sweetness of sound, poetry, romance, logic and rationality, order, character). Fishman (1997) has documented the astonishing range of compliments that poets, statesmen, chauvinists, nationalists, patriots, and "ordinary people" pay their languages. Just how many different languages can be the most beautiful, the clearest, the most elegant or the most poetic? Many, perhaps all of them, it seems. Languages are excellent candidates for such beliefs. The combination is irresistible: there are many languages (permitting comparison), their speakers are often organised into groupings with histories of rivalry (nations, ethnicities, tribes, religions), and there is no objective way to decide. "Science" cannot adjudicate among the competing claims (subjectivity is like that).

History is full of claims of the perfection of different languages (Eco 1997). Nations, political movements, religions and even civilisation itself (or themselves) owe their very existence to human communication systems. Perfection is one powerful ideology that has impacted on language, a social ideology attached to ideologies more specifically linguistic in character (Schieffelin, Woolard and Kroskity 1998); beliefs about languages and their virtues, vices and problems, as well as vigorous systems of policing of language used by ordinary people, to assert correctness and standards.

Beliefs about language usage apply to those native to a given language, and are applied to learners, and impact on learning as well as language behaviour. Schiffman (1996) calls these layers of belief, attitudes and ideas "linguistic culture", and he shows in relation to English in the US, Tamil in India, and French in France how such linguistic culture systematically influences learning, policy and behaviour in languages.

How insiders feel, think or praise their languages set up the communicative profile that someone outside the language, seeking to learn it, encounters. The communicative profile offered to the outside learner is the culturally infused idealisation, the beliefs and attitudes, that impacts on the learner's views towards the community of speakers. In other words, if you are a native English speaker and you are studying Chinese or Italian, what are your expectations about how the Chinese or Italians actually communicate? What do you know and feel about what they believe about how they communicate? What language behaviour and values do you have from English about processes of communication that are similar to, different from (or simply unexamined), that influence your responses to Chinese or Italian? For example, what would you disclose about yourself, your personal life and values,

to your English-speaking peers that you might expect someone of your age and "station in life" in Chinese or Italian to also do? Most evidence of this kind of culture in communication emerges in everyday mundane spoken interaction. When cultural difference is expressed in everyday routine communication, it occurs in specific circumstances that can be critical to understanding the interaction itself:

- The context of the communication (the physical setting and social relationships or roles of the participants);
- The mode of the communication (e.g. written, spoken, mixed modality, etc);
- The orientations of the participants (what they are seeking to achieve);
- The level of concrete knowledge they have of each other as individuals, their social roles and the cultural stereotypes;
- Their non-verbal and extra-verbal displays towards each other;
- Their sense of face (their own and the others');)
- The extent to which they are themselves dissonant with or representative of mainstream attitudes and values within their own social group;
- How their main language achieves different speech acts (promises, threats or apologies);
- How they construct a shared sense of what their encounter will be about and their personal role within it;
- The view of the native speakers about learners and learners' use of the language;
- The ideology of the native speakers about the language, correctness and norms, qualities and attributes, and esteemed aspects of the language.

In all encounters there is prior social structure contained in the specific interaction. Buying train tickets anywhere is always an already structured and prepared context. The setting is predictable, the purposes (roles) of the physically present people involved are comfortably predictable. In such pre-formulated contexts language utterances are also structured and predictable. It is not likely that someone at a ticket counter will say: *Do you think the Simon Leys translation of the Analects of Confucius is consistently faithful to the original?* Nor will the reply to the expected question about ticketing, costs or timetables ever be: *The investment climate for Alpaca wool has become very positive!* Nevertheless the high level of specification of language and context in structured encounters occurs within a wider framework of communicative stereotypes, wide generalisations such as: *The French don't like it if you speak to them in English; Japanese don't like foreigners speaking good Japanese; Chinese don't believe foreigners can ever speak fluent Chinese; Italians enjoy it when you make mistakes (and) Germans are very precise and you have to be very clear in what you say.*

As both stereotypes and generalisations, such beliefs reflect commonly voiced foreigner predictions of aspects of linguistic culture, the communicative profile, of these language communities which form everyday guidelines for actual use of the given language and the expected relations between learners and native speakers. Such

popularly circulating usage-guidelines are not linguistic, and not at all grammatical, but extra-linguistic cultural stereotypes.

It was noted earlier that two attributes of culture (that it varies and that one of the factors that influences its variation is the contexts in which it arises) are often used to argue that culture is not teachable. That culture is not static is taken to mean that the more implicit expressions of culture vary, and characterising them would lead inevitably to stereotypical representation. Unfortunately, this argument leaves language teachers with a major dilemma. Culture in communication can have an impact on the effectiveness of learning and should be addressed in teaching, but attempts to deal with this often lead to unacceptable levels of generality and stereotyping. To overcome this we are attempting to deal with cultural input as broad but pedagogically useful stimuli to initiate the teaching of culture in language use, in relation to specific languages.

Dealing with non-linguistic aspects of communication, specifically in relation to learners in schools and adult classes, means we are concerned with how learners can understand and use communication conventions of the language they are studying, all the while being aware that those conventions are not fixed rules. We must also be equally aware that some of these patterns of culture in communication may be expressed grammatically as well as in extra-linguistic ways. This means that we are dealing with inter-cultural or cross-cultural communication, not just to understand or study how people understand each other when they are from different cultures, backgrounds and languages, but how to teach effective interaction (speaking as well as understanding).

Inter-cultural communication has long been neglected in language teaching, and in different parts of the world this field is understood and examined in different ways. For example, in the United States, people working in inter-cultural studies are often influenced by research from the behavioural sciences, especially psychology; in Europe, inter-cultural education is more often approached from within the academic disciplines of sociology and anthropology, and in recent years also from within linguistics. In Japan, Korea and Taiwan, inter-cultural studies (sometimes called international studies) form a considerable part of business related English courses, and tend to be informed by psychology and social psychology research on different national cultures and traditions. These all produce quite different kinds of pedagogies for teaching culture. However, there is a strong tradition of inter-cultural education in which language teaching is seldom included.

Intercultural education without language teaching

Asserting a link between language and culture is ancient, but its history in language education is only recent. Within English teaching Robert Lado's 1957 volume, *Linguistics across cultures*, was an important early attempt to make teaching connections between foreign languages and their associated culture. Lado's work was fed into American moves to operationalise culture in language education in the growing context of American post-war expansion. Following the Second World War the US was the world's dominant power. This new role required American society and government to take an interest in the societies where its commercial and political interests were engaged. Since many of these societies were the developing nations of Asia, Africa and Latin America, the specific cultural interests activated by this world role for America were not the traditional ones found in civilisation courses in traditional foreign language departments of universities.

The expansion of international aid, and moves towards thinking about human rights in a universal way, stimulated by the newly created United Nations Organisation, also had an effect. The results were the creation of organisations for young Americans to work in development contexts (The Peace Corps among others), and a vast expansion of foreign language education focused on non-traditional languages, sometimes tribal or small languages without writing systems, in which spoken discourse was the main focus of learning. The learning task was exacerbated by the fact that many of these languages shared few cultural assumptions with western-educated English speakers. Culture therefore came to be re-imagined. No longer was it sufficient to think of culture as literature, aesthetics, and history. The entire tradition of thinking about culture and language connections inherited from Mathew Arnold was totally inapplicable. Increasingly the need to focus on culture in communication came to the fore. Influenced by the American ethnographic tradition, exemplified by Clifford Geertz, the work of another American anthropologist, Edward Hall, came to play a key role. In a 1959 book entitled *Silent language*, Hall identified some ways in which culture and communication were infused in each other; culture shaping how communication happens and communication being central to cultural transmission and vitality. Hall's approach looked at aspects of communication such as tonality, speech pitch, intonation, gestures, movements (kinesics), and other para- or extra-linguistic dimensions of communication.

In later work (*The hidden dimension*, 1966) Hall extended his interest into the role of physical space (proxemics) in communication, and, much later still, (*Beyond culture*, 1981) he categorised communication in different cultures, inaugurating the concept of high context and low context cultures. These are distinguished by the extent to which speakers imply information they want to get across, or state the information explicitly. In high context cultures, speakers typically have a shared worldview and can imply a great deal of their messages, whereas in low context cultures, people are more like strangers to each other and must make information explicitly available, in

spoken words and discourses, or in writing, because they can assume less about each other's expectations, background assumptions and knowledge.

Hall's early ideas found their way into American programs of pre-departure culture training for Peace Corps volunteers. Despite Hall's treatment of culture and language as inseparable, many early inter-cultural programs adopted a very distinctive pedagogy of culture teaching that often fully separated it from language teaching. In these programs learners were engaged in activities (simulation exercises, drama, role-plays, etc) in which they were invited to see the world as others do (Fowler and Mumford 1995; Seelye 1996). Via these activities of immersion the participants were assisted to encounter and resolve misunderstanding, conflict, tension and culture shock leading to direct study of the contrasts between values and practices of different cultural groups. Learners were immersed in activities in which their behaviours and reactions were assessed against common stimuli, looking to identify differences of perception, moral judgement, interpretation, belief about causation, responsibility, blame, and were asked to notice and describe these differences. Inevitably patterns of belief from the cosmological scale (life, death and law), to events of history, and cultural practices, such as food, divisions of the day, and many others, were revealed. This process of relativising perceptions and values oscillated between focussing on specific target cultures (Americans and Filipinos, or Japanese and indigenous Guatemalans), to "cultures in general", rather than specific and named other cultures.

As international commerce through trade accelerated from the late 1960s, especially after the crises in the global oil markets of the 1970s, these activities in turn found their way into training programs for international business. The emergence of the trans-national corporation meant that many executives from western and other developed countries would have staff drawn from many parts of the world, and in any case would be negotiating and conducting business on a global scale. This inevitable encounter with cultural difference in commercial contexts stimulated inter-cultural training for business executives. By the 1980s and 1990s, this came to focus the culture concept at the business enterprise itself, seeing organisational culture as a focus of attention and as an entity with its own distinctive cultural practices and values. Seeing culture in this way stressed the internal identity groups that comprise a corporation, and its patterns of management, finance, planning, customer relations, as well as the cultures of clients, owners and shareholders. In extending "culture" to the corporation, and applying the approaches of 1960s style inter-cultural training based on activities of perception, worldview, attitudes and values, intercultural training found fertile new ground, coming to regard occupational and ideological categories, as much as ethnic and national differences, as "cultural". In much of the training originating in the US, psychology, and especially the psychology of influence through socialisation ('social' psychology), played a prominent part. In north Asian business contexts there has been heavy influence from US precedents as Japan, and then Taiwan and South Korea became formidable industrial and technological powerhouses. Much of this has been conducted in and through English and there has

grown up a field of inter-cultural training delivered in and through English which does not involve foreign or second language teaching (Pusch 1981; Kohls and Knight 1994).

By contrast in Europe inter-cultural studies originated from the domestic institutions created to overcome the immense turmoil of the Second World War (the agencies of UNESCO, the Council of Europe, and the 1956 Treaty of Rome from which emerged the European Union). In continental Europe, languages have been a key part of the ideas of inter-cultural education, and the role of languages in interculturalism remains politically sensitive (Alred, Byram and Fleming 2003; Phillipson 2003).

Also decisive has been the emergence of approaches to language that have departed from mentalist and idealist abstractions as found in the linguistics of Noam Chomsky and his school. Reacting against this, from the middle of the 1960s, much scholarship on language has stressed its located context, its settings and purposes, and therefore has foregrounded variation (Hymes 1974). A key stimulus to this work was the ethnographic study of actual, and not idealised, communication. In turn, all this stimulated research and conceptualisation, itself reflecting cross-cultural and inter-disciplinary perspectives and frameworks, in applied linguistics (especially pragmatics and discourse analysis), and therefore has had a washback effect onto teaching practice in many parts of the world. Similar moves can be traced in the field of literacy. Ethnographic approaches to literacy conducted in Iran, Africa and in the United States led to major challenges to the received wisdom that literacy (technologising the word) had produced deep and irreconcilable cognitive divides between communities that had developed written literacy and those that had only oral literacy. From the collapse of the previous idea that there was a fundamental cognitive, and civilisational, divide between oral-only and written-literacy communities, a substitute explanation about the effects of literacy on culture came about. This stresses literacy as a social practice with considerable social and intellectual variations deriving from the different located, variable and socially specific contexts of literacy events, literacy values and literacy practices (Scribner and Cole 1981; Scollon and Scollon 1981 and 1995; Ong 1982; Heath 1983; Street 1993). Culture here too comes to assume an expanded importance in accounting for observed differences in human language behaviours.

If it is indeed the case, as proposed in the definition of culture by Kramsch, that *language is culture*, then the aim of the bulk of languages teaching, communicative competence, is not ultimately about a divided or separated set of competencies, linguistic and socio-cultural. Communicative competence must be conceived as these two conjoined in a single kind of competent behaviour and knowledge. Just as we have devoted attention to defining culture, then it this connectedness between language and culture that calls for a reinvigorated notion of language too.

Increasingly the impact of context on what is said, and how things are said, that is, how communicative profiles are modified in actual instances of language use, has led scholars to re-imagine connections. For example, Ochs, Schegloff and Thompson

(1996:4) connect grammar, standing here for language, and context, standing here for culture:

Grammars are deeply socio-cultural and integral to cross-cultural analysis because they illuminate how humans structure the world.

In the hands of Scollon and Scollon (1995) inter-cultural communication comes to encompass systems of discourse particular to given groups and the associated ideologies and stereotypes that accompany different discourses. These shape how we talk, and write, and interact in the corporate world, in our professional lives and in other settings. In these settings our social roles (of gender, ideology, interests and age) influence how we see and represent things.

The research interests that have been shaped by the idea of inter-cultural communication are very broad and, collectively, make us aware of the essentially social character of language. Language in use is inescapably social, even written language that is displaced in time between its production and its consumption. It follows that teaching second languages effectively (that is teaching languages that are foreign to the learner, even if he or she is living in a society where that language is spoken) necessarily means taking account of the contexts of history and society that have given rise to that language. This in turn means being aware that languages are reflections of cultural phenomena, and that they themselves are cultural phenomena, and that learners already have a functioning meaning system and are acquiring another. As Freedman (2001) has noted, the possibility, or inevitability, of encounter with other cultural and language systems is already built in to most cultural and linguistic systems. They already anticipate encounters and provide strategies for how such encounters may be conducted.

If the goal of language teaching were simply to teach grammar, the only questions worth asking would concern the techniques of effective teaching and reliable testing. An examination of the curriculum goals, policy statements and aims of education systems across Australia and indeed in many other countries, reveals a very different perspective. Foreign language education is almost always claimed to help learners achieve some of the deepest purposes of schooling, reminiscent of some of the highest civilisational aims described by Mathew Arnold, though in more contemporary language. These aims involve humanising ideals of learning by opening up the minds of learners to difference and otherness. Raymond Williams' type ambitions for more equal social outcomes from schooling are also invoked when education policy statements call for foreign language education to contribute to the re-constitution of society along more egalitarian lines, and the combating of racism, prejudice and intolerance. It is precisely because educators and planners place goals of such vast magnitude and importance at the centre of the work of language teaching that it has so often let down learners and the wider community. Claiming social improvement and even social transformation as the central objective of language teaching and then providing to learners only the routines of grammar or translation

unconnected with any wider social context makes a mockery of such ambitious goals. In other words, to locate at the centre of language education the highest and deepest goals of culture and society is to risk asking very large questions and then providing a very small answer.

First it is to claim something for which there is ample contrary evidence. There are many bigots, sexists, racists and narrow chauvinists who are proficient in more than one language. This bald fact induces us to ask how to express the goal of inter-cultural empathy in ways that preserve what most teachers, intuitively and practically, know; that while language learning can generate insightful inter-cultural awareness, it does not necessarily do so. And second, it is to confuse understanding and knowledge (of a foreign or second language) with behaviour (towards others), and to confound interests and values (personal or economic ambitions, and beliefs) with knowledge (formal knowledge of cultural history, practices and traditions).

These important distinctions, and the questions that arise in discussing them, have been raised in the first part of the book, and ask what kind of understanding of language and what kind of understanding of culture, allow us to invoke such grand ideals for languages education? And, if we are right in claiming these grand ideals, how can they be turned into real and concrete patterns of educational practice? Can we offer insights, examples, programs, syllabuses for languages to teachers that are sensitive to the relations among social groups and how these relations are located in discourse?

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3 A conceptual framework to help teachers identify where culture is located in language use

Chantal Crozet

In this chapter we show how language teachers can make the intangible cultural features of spoken language tangible, or in Kramsch's (1995b) words, how they can 'make the invisible visible' to themselves and their students. We present a conceptual framework which can help teachers identify where culture is located in language use. The different authors in the subsequent chapters of this volume — all practising language teachers — have used this framework to present some of the main 'invisible' codes of the language they teach.

In language use socio-cultural norms along with grammatical rules and any other linguistic items do not exist for mere conventionalism. They exist primarily to support the expression of *meaning* in human interaction. With the notion of *meaning* comes inevitably the notions of *ethos* and *worldview*. Seen from this perspective, cultural traits as found in language use can be interpreted as the expression of *meaning behind and with the word*. Defined more precisely, cultural traits in spoken language can also be understood as the expression of the different values members of a given society attach to the concepts of 'self' and 'other' as well as the expression of the values they attached to the relationship between "self/other" and physical and societal environments. It is in this sense that the embedding of cultural traits in language use reflect — substantially if not completely — both the *ethos* and *worldview* of a society.

The relevance of teaching cultural traits in a language class is to give students the tools which will enable them to discriminate between what in language constitutes culture and what does not. Common cultural traits can be thought of as being different forms of linguistic devices used in the target culture as "... networks of conspiracies aimed at common cultural targets" (Wierzbicka (1991:282).

Common cultural targets can be made explicit to students by the teacher. They can be presented as a "typology of cultural traits" at the onset of a course. This typology will serve as a constant frame of reference to both teacher and students as

they explore together through various classroom activities the complexity of the links between language and culture.

Kerbrat-Orecchioni (1994:63-112), drawing on different sources of research on the study of cross-cultural communication, offers an approach for describing what she refers to as "the communicative profile" of speech communities, or in more sophisticated terms: "la typologie des ethnolectes conversationnels" ("the typology of conversational ethnolects"). "Speech community" is defined for our purpose according to Hymes' (1974:51) terms:

...a community sharing knowledge of rules for the conduct and interpretation of speech. Such sharing comprises knowledge of a least one form of speech, and knowledge also of its patterns of use.

Kerbrat-Orecchioni's (1994) approach can be used by language teachers to help them structure their research on the typology of cultural traits in the language they teach. She proposes four different "axes" or principles along which the communicative profile of any given speech community can be described. In more recent years new research has identified the place and value accorded to the expression of emotions and feelings in a society as being highly culturally specific. In her recent work, Kerbrat-Orecchioni (2000:33-74) herself has argued for the recognition of the importance of feelings and emotions in linguistic studies. Therefore, the five 'axes' we propose to explore below include emotions and feelings, and they are:

1. The importance placed on speaking in the functioning of a society
(*"Place de la parole dans le fonctionnement de la société"*).
2. Approaches to inter-personal relationships
(*"Conception de la relation personnelle"*).
3. Approaches to understanding politeness
(*"Conception de la politesse"*).
4. Level of ritualisation
(*"Degré de ritualisation"*).
5. Expression of emotions and feelings.

Below is a more detailed explanation of what each of those axes are as well as illustrations of how they can be used to make the general cultural traits of a society "visible" in language classes. A particular focus is given to the illustration of French cultural traits for the sake of providing a set of examples.

Approaches to interpersonal relationships

This axis refers to the way different societies conceive and express interpersonal relationships. It is a highly complex and culture specific area of human interaction. Speech communities can be split into three groups according to the type of ethical tendencies they express through their handling of human relationships (Kerbrat-Orecchioni 1994:72-87):

- Societies valuing proximity versus distance
- Societies valuing hierarchy versus equality
- Societies valuing consensus versus conflict.

Proximity versus distance

Two markers according to Kerbrat-Orecchioni can be used to identify whether the socio-cultural norms of a society express proximity and/or distance between individuals:

- the degree of physical contact allowed between people interacting;
- terms of address: distinction between a polite and a familiar second-person pronoun/different address forms (ie: titles and names).

Morris (1977) divides European societies into three categories according to the proxemic conventions of each country. France is among the most tactile cultures along with Italy, Greece and Turkey. French people tend to engage their bodies a lot in conversations. Greetings such as "Bonjour" are usually accompanied by two to four kisses (depending on the geographical location) on the cheeks in semi-formal and familiar interactions. In familiar conversations, more often than not, kisses alone are used for greetings (Traverso:1993).

In a speech community, the use or non-use of formal versus familiar second person pronouns, as well as when and how they are used, all indicate how this community regulates personal relationships. Second person pronouns combine with names and titles. Together they express precise pragmatic values. A general outline of how terms of address are used in the culture studied will prepare students for a further, more complex inquiry. It will give them an introduction on how proximity and distance are monitored through verbal interaction. In France for example, variables such as age and context will largely influence the choice between "tu" and "vous" and whether a title plus surname or a first name alone will be used. For instance, in a work environment more and more people use a first name (meaning we know each other well) with "vous" (meaning we are not friends) while between two close friends first names plus "tu" will be used. With regard to the use of "tu" and "vous" pronouns, there also seem to be discrepancies between speakers of different generations. Béal (1992b) distinguishes three age groups which could be used as a guideline for a student to know when to use or not to use "tu":

- with individuals below 25 years of age "tu" is used in most circumstances;

- with the "post sixty- eight generation", that is with people now aged below fifty, "tu" is used more widely;
- for the older generation, "tu" is normally restricted to relatives or intimate friends.

Societies valuing hierarchy versus equality

A hierarchical society or high power culture is characterised by the large number of what Kerbrat-Orecchioni (1994:74) calls "taxèmes," that is, hierarchy or social status markers. "Taxèmes" constitute all types of verbal and non-verbal behaviour which speakers use to position themselves socially when they interact. All speech communities have socio-cultural markers. The intercultural difference lies in the different categories and number of "taxèmes" available in a given culture, which in itself reflects the degree of importance speakers attach to them.

Hijirida and Ho-min (1986) for example, in their study of cross-cultural patterns of honorifics in English, Japanese and Korean, notice that all three languages have sets of address and reference terms that are sensitive to social stratification, but that English has a much more restricted set. This difference can be explained by the lesser degree of importance English national culture gives to hierarchical status than Japanese and Korean societies.

Generally speaking, societies with a high egalitarian ethos such as France, Australia, or America use hierarchical markers but do so less obviously (Kerbrat-Orecchioni 1996:80).

Societies valuing consensus versus conflict

Speech communities value consensus and conflict differently. For example it is widely recognised that the main trait of Japanese communicative style is that it emphasises *omoiyari* "empathy" over explicit verbal communication (Clancy 1986: 213). For Japanese people, overt expression of conflict is a threat to social harmony. Indirectness in verbal interaction is widely used as a linguistic device to avoid potential conflict. On the other side of the spectrum, Israeli society uses argument as a form of sociability. According to Schiffrin (1984:311) Israelis enjoy disagreeing constantly. They love to compete for turns in conversations and to be out of alignment with each other. This is for them a way to show solidarity and to protect their intimacy.

French people are at a mid-point some way in between the Japanese and Israelis with regard to aversion versus taste for conflict:

... chez nous, le consensus est généralement jugé trop "mou", et la conversation vire facilement à la discussion, ou règnent le "moi je..." et l'esprit de contradiction

(... in our country, consensus is usually considered too "soft", and conversation easily turns into discussion, where the "me, I ..." and the tendency to contradict rule") (Kerbrat-Orecchioni 1994:85).

Kerbrat-Orrechioni further mentions that French people even find *pleasure* in disagreeing with each other.

Béal (1993:102-3) identifies the differences in the acceptance of conflict between French and Australian people as a cause of negative stereotyping from both communities. Australians find the French style of overtly defending one's opinion ridiculous, and conversely, the French find the "non-committal" Australian behaviour hypocritical.

Approaches to understanding politeness

The rules of politeness in a second language are not easy to recognise. They pervade all verbal interactions and their transgression can lead to serious communication breakdown. Teachers and students can both benefit from a general introduction to a theoretical framework which will help them to uncover and understand the rules of politeness in the language they teach or study. The rules of politeness we refer to must be distinguished from what is generally meant by politeness such as manners, appropriate ways of dressing and so on. What we are primarily concerned with here is linguistic politeness; that is, what people do in a given speech community to ensure verbal communication remains harmonious.

The most highly recognised theory of linguistic politeness has been elaborated by Brown and Levinson (1987). It can be used, as a starting point, in any language to understand how politeness functions. Brown and Levinson introduced four basic notions:

- a) *the notion of "face"*: every individual has two "faces". The "*negative face*" corresponds to one's need to protect her/his own territory. This can refer to personal space, time, possessions, and anything a culture might consider private (i.e., someone's income). The "*positive face*" corresponds to one's need to project a positive image of her/his self when interacting with others.
- b) *the notion of "face threatening act" (FTA)*: A face threatening act corresponds to any form of verbal behaviour which is a potential threat to either the negative or positive face of interactants (i.e., insults, indiscreet questions, orders etc...). Kerbrat-Orecchioni (1996:53) opposes FTAs to FFAs (*face flattering acts*). This distinction can be useful for teachers in developing language activities with clear goals, as it allows a differentiation between speech acts which have essentially a negative effect on an interactant (for example an insult as an FTA) and speech acts which have a positive effect (for example a compliment as an FFA).
- c) *the notion of "face want"*: this is the overriding principle in any interaction which tends to make any participant in a conversation protective of one's own face and of others. "Face want" is *the natural desire* to protect one's face from potential external threats and to prevent the face of others from being threatened.

- d) the notion of "face work" relates to all the strategies interactants use to protect the faces of all involved in a conversation. This notion depends on three main variables — the gravity of the FTAs, social distance and power relation between speakers.

With reference to the four notions presented above, and in particular with notions (a) and (b), language teachers can investigate (aided by available research) the general tendencies underlying the rules of politeness in the target language. Speech communities can be placed on a continuum from between those with a preference for negative politeness (ie: high respect of personal space, softening of FTAs) to those with a preference for positive politeness (ie: high production of FFAs).

France, for example, is a society like most western societies, where respect for one's individual territory is very important. Obviously this varies in degree among western countries. English people for instance are far more protective of their "privacy" than the French.

In France along with negative politeness, positive politeness is also highly valued, hence the profusion of compliments in everyday conversations (Traverso: 1993) or "overdone" expressions such as "*merci mille fois*" (literally "thank you a thousand times" meaning "thank you so much").

In everyday verbal interactions, Béal (1992b:280-284) has noticed some interesting differences between French people and Australians with regards to the protection of one's face. She suggests that Australians focus on preserving face in the short term (that of the duration of the interaction) where French people are more concerned about long-term preservation of face. This difference in preservation of face would explain why Australians seem to prefer to say anything to avoid conflict or displeasure at the time of the interaction in order to maintain harmony between interactants "at all costs". On the contrary, the French, focusing on the maintenance of the long term aspect of human relationships, prefer to be more upfront with their thoughts or emotions, to be "sincere". They prefer to lose face in the short term if it will protect the relationship in the long term. To illustrate cultural differences in the handling of face, Béal (1992b:282) quotes an Australian journalist who very colourfully commented on the "frankness" of many European countries:

Many European races, on the other hand, are astonishingly frank. "You have a rump like a horse in that skirt" a Dutch friend once announced. Unfortunately, she was right and I may have cried and kicked for a week but I did exchange the skirt ... She may not have been able to crack a career as a diplomat, but in the end I found Annelies as refreshing as summer rain.

Level of ritualisation.

This principle which can help describe the communicative profile of a speech community refers to societies where the socio-cultural behaviour of interactants follows a strict observance of rituals and routines, as opposed to societies where conversational rules are not so strictly adhered to, giving more ample room to the individual to accommodate common rules to her/his personal taste (Kerbrat-Orecchioni 1996:82). France for example belongs to societies with a low degree of ritualisation compared to some Arabic societies where the dominant religion, Islam, governs all aspects of daily life (for instance the obligation of praying five times a day and strict observance of *Ramadan* — a month of fasting). French culture not only allows for deviation from socio-cultural codes, it also praises eccentricity as a marker of a personalised way of showing friendliness. To be too conventional can be interpreted as insincere, hence not genuinely caring (Kerbrat-Orecchioni 1994:110).

The expression of emotions and feelings

Kerbrat-Orecchioni (2000:55) has argued that it is possible to identify "the global system of the manifestation of emotions allowed or prohibited" in a given society, and that it is also possible to distinguish between societies with a strong emotional ethos and societies with a more inhibited, controlled emotional ethos. Societies with a strong emotional ethos would be for example African Americans, Jewish New Yorkers, Poles, Italians and Greeks². More emotionally reserved societies are found in Java, Bali, Hawaii and among the Navajo and the Inuit. The challenge for language teachers is to identify how emotions and feelings are expressed in the language they teach, while evaluating the place and value given to the very expression of emotions in a particular culture. It is not an easy task. To start with what constitutes emotions and feelings may vary from one culture to another. Wierzbicka (1999) for example argues that:

...even languages culturally (as well as genetically) closely related to English provide evidence of different ways of conceptualizing and categorizing human experience.
(Wierzbicka 1999:3)

She further argues that the word "emotion" in English is associated with "feeling", "thinking" and "a person's body", concluding that:

All these things can be and need to be studied: ways of thinking, ways of feeling, ways of living, the links between ways of living and ways of thinking, the links between thoughts and feelings, the links between what people feel and what happens inside their bodies, and so on.

(Wierzbicka 1999:5)

Language teachers can initiate the enquiry into how emotions and feelings are both conceptualised and expressed in the language they teach. French society, for example,

on a spectrum from strong to low emotional ethos, is likely to fall in between the two. The expression of both positive and negative emotions and feelings is far more acceptable and even expected than in an Anglo-Australian society. With regard to how the allowance of the expression of emotions and feelings in French culture differs from Anglo-Australian culture, French teachers can help their students avoid negative stereotyping of the 'over-expressiveness' of some French native-speakers.

The communicative profile of a speech community can be presented to students as a sum of the dominant cultural traits which are relevant to the understanding of culture in verbal interaction, as illustrated below (with reference to the teaching of French cultural traits). Each individual teacher can build in the communicative profile s/he presents traits which are of particular relevance to the understanding of cultural differences between the target language and the learners' native culture(s). The communicative profile of French culture presented below should not, in that sense, be read as a rigid framework, but rather as an example of how cultural knowledge can be organised to be more depictable for learners.

Communicative profile of French conversational ethnolects living in France

Level of verbosity	Interpersonal relationships	Rules of politeness	Level of ritualisation	Emotions & feelings
High level of verbosity. Seen as a marker of successful interaction. Aversion to silence.	Highly tactile society. Egalitarian ethos overrides need for strong hierarchical markers. High acceptance of conflict. Enjoyment of verbal confrontation. Importance of asserting one's opinions.	Both negative and positive politeness. Abundance of FFAs.	Low degree of ritualisation. Variation from social cultural codes can be praised.	Relatively strong emotional ethos.

Different ways and classroom activities which language teachers can use to introduce their students to the communicative profile of the language they teach are presented in subsequent chapters in this volume.

A few additional comments need to be made regarding the structure proposed above for describing the typology of cultural traits of any given speech community. The following points need to be made explicit to students during language classes.

- The cultural traits of a society fluctuate with time, space and social class. Variables such as age, sex and personality can distort or cancel the culture-specificity of a particular form of behaviour. For example a very introverted

French person might not display the high level of verbosity expected from most of her/his compatriots.

- Language teachers should discuss the cultural traits of a given speech community in comparison with those of some other societies (especially the dominant native culture of students and other cultures if students in the class are of multi-ethnic origins). Cultural traits described in terms of degree rather than absolute truths can help students avoid negative stereotyping of either their own native culture or the culture they are studying.
- Presenting a typology of cultural traits in a second language classroom is not meant to simplify the understanding of culture. It is meant to introduce students to one particular perspective on cultural context which is highly relevant to understanding verbal interaction. Obviously the whole culture of a people cannot be reduced to a typology of cultural traits, but to teach culture in language use as only a process or as intercultural skills to acquire, without providing some initial content, is not helpful to teachers.

Teaching a typology of cultural traits is, hence, only an initial tool for students to use to unravel the complex webs which structure verbal interaction and culture. The teaching of cultural traits is an attempt to follow Hymes' (1972) advice when he advocates that: "The key to understanding language in context is to start not with language but with context" (Hymes 1972: xix).

Notes

- 1 "Verbosity" is used here as a technical term. It does not have a negative connotation and refers simply to the volume (amount) of speech considered acceptable in a given society
- 2 See Kerbrat-Orecchioni's chapter for references on these examples in Plantin et al. (2000) "Les émotions dans les interactions" ARCI Presses universitaires de LYON.

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Part 2
Theory in
Practice

1 Chinese

Li Kaining¹

China is a big country, so every attempt to describe it and its culture is fraught with the danger of generalisation. The 1.2 billion human beings currently living in China are all different, and the country itself consists of regions which are vastly different from each other. Indeed, at first glance, a cosmopolitan yuppie from Beijing — an Internet surfer with a Rolex and a nice suit — has little in common with a poor peasant from Gansu province still spending most of his life working in the harsh sun, as his ancestors did before him. The first is deeply interested in the outcome of the current US elections while the second hardly knows that Chairman Mao, the Great Helmsman, has died. In addition, whatever the politicians say, there are actually at least three Chinese states — Chinese People's Republic (aka Mainland China), Chinese Republic (aka Taiwan) and Singapore — and each China has many specific features of its own. The thriving overseas Chinese communities in South East Asia, the United States, Australia and Europe make the picture even more complicated. However, all, or at the very least, most Chinese do have something in common. Many traditions of Chinese culture and civilisation are universal, not depending on the social and regional specifics, and students of Chinese must acquire some knowledge of them. The picture presented below is necessarily generalised and concentrates on Mainland China — by far the biggest centre of Chinese culture. It is concerned mainly with educated urban dwellers, but a large part is also applicable to other social groups and regions.

The importance of speaking

Level of verbosity

Two and half thousand years ago, Lao Zi, an ancient Chinese sage, better known to the west as Lao Tsu, said: “知者不言, 言者不知” (Those who know do not talk, those who talk do not know). This statement is just another indication of the suspicion with which the Chinese have always treated excessive verbosity. A person who avoids talking much is normally perceived as 这人城府很深 (This person is someone of depth). Unless you can say something especially witty and deep, something which will impress your listeners and gain you the reputation of a wise and thoughtful person, you'd better remain silent. This notion is adequately reflected in the Chinese expression 语不惊人死不休 (Unless (I can say) something that really amazes people, I will never rest in peace). This is especially true in regard to socially senior persons, who avoid communicating with their juniors unless it is absolutely necessary. A talkative boss in China is seen not as a “nice and charming person”, but as “shallow and not serious”, and probably not quite up to his/her job.

However in real life, there are many occasions when you simply just have to talk. While in China, neither students nor teachers on visits to China can afford to spend all their time in dignified silence. Hence, students should be taught how to talk about nothing, how to engage in conversation for the sake of conversation. This practice is common to all societies: small talk is a proven lubricant for the wheels of social contact. Nevertheless, in different cultures there are different sets of topics that can or cannot be used for such “talking about nothing”.

Things you can talk about

Weather

Like in most English speaking cultures, weather forms a perfectly suitable subject for small talk. It is not incidental that the small talk or chat in Chinese is often called 聊天 (literally — “talk about weather”). The neutrality of the weather, which does not depend on any political, cultural or social developments, makes it a perfectly suitable topic for this type of communication. The following mini dialogues can be used both in formal or informal situations, even though the third one may sound a bit too casual to an English speaker.

甲: 今天 这 天儿 真 不错!
(today this day really not bad)

A: The weather is not bad today!

乙: 是 不错!
(is — emphatic not bad)

B: Not bad at all!

甲: 堪培拉 那儿 的 天气 怎么样?

(Canberra there of weather how about)

A: How is Canberra's weather?

乙: 不错, 一 年 四 季 都 有 太阳。

(not bad, one year four season all have sun)

B: Not bad. It's sunny all year around.

甲: 今天 会 下雨 吗?

(today will drop rain question marker)

A: Will it rain today?

乙: 可能 吧。

(possible suggestion marker)

天气预报 可是 报 了。

(weather forecast to emphasise report completion marker)

B: Possibly. The weather forecast did say so.

甲: 那 就 不用 带 伞 了。

(that emphatic no need take umbrella any more)

A: In that case, (I) don't need to take an umbrella.

乙: 怎么 呢?

(how come a particle to make sentence short)

B: How come?

甲: 天气预报 反着 听 没 错。

(weather forecast opposite listen no mistake)

A: (For sure) it will be the opposite of what you heard on the weather report.

Similarly, questions about the weather — highest and lowest temperature, seasons, etc, are guaranteed to elicit a stream of information and the possibility of continued interaction.

Food

The second topic is food. The Chinese tend to employ this topic more often than, say, speakers of English. Perhaps this reflects a long-standing Chinese affection for the culinary art. When eating out, some remarks about the food in the particular restaurant are nearly always expected, and often this can develop into a long discussion of merits and peculiarities of various Chinese culinary traditions. The more you are willing to ask about Chinese cuisine and the more interesting information you have about all kinds of western cuisine the better. Even if you can only enlighten your Chinese hosts about meat pies and fish-and-chips, it can also be useful for keeping the conversation going. Quite often the perceived medical benefits of certain foods are discussed, and almost all kinds of foodstuff are believed to be good for some body parts:

你 血压 高? 多 吃 点儿 芹菜。

(you blood pressure high? much eat a bit celery)

You have high blood pressure? Eat more celery.

你 老公 那 事儿 不 行? 吃 点儿 甲鱼。
(you old man that thing not ok? eat a bit turtle)

Your husband is not functioning? Eat some turtles.

Whether you think those remarks are scientific or not, a good piece of advice is, just nod your head and make some “hmm, hmm” noise to indicate that you are listening. Being argumentative in public is perceived as an indication of 没有教养 (having no manners).

Traffic, pollution, children's education, sports, travel experiences, pets and recent changes

The rapid industrial development of China over the last few decades has brought about two relatively new topics of small talk — traffic and pollution. Complaining about difficulties with parking, getting to some place on time, etc., are quite common these days. Often Chinese spend time discussing the environmental questions — rather in the same way as they talk about the weather — without dangerously politicised remarks. Other topics that could be safely talked about are children's education, sports, travel experiences or even pets. If you are invited to a Chinese dinner, it is a good idea to give your Chinese hosts or guests an opportunity to talk about the great changes that China is undergoing. The recent changes have made most Chinese, regardless of what they think about the current political system, intensely proud of the Chinese economic and technological achievements. So give your hosts some opportunities to talk about these topics as well. In most cases, you have definitely 抻着了爱国主义的那根筋 (touched their soft spot of patriotism).

Age, family background, personal financial details etc., but usually in informal situations

One of the many differences between Chinese and Western cultures lies in the definition of “personal”. In general, English speakers, if asked by a stranger, perceive questions about age, family background, marital status, number of children and, especially, personal financial details, as more or less improper and intrusive. The situation in China is different: these questions are seen there as quite suitable, even between complete strangers. Historically it reflects Confucian fondness of hierarchy. Such questions help both parties to determine their relative position in the society's pecking order. On the other hand, this is one of those typical Chinese strategies to make you feel at home, to make you become one of 咱们 — an inclusive “we” by being able to talk at a personal level. This point will be elaborated later. In recent decades, educated Chinese began to avoid these topics, especially when dealing with foreigners, but less educated people very often start a conversation with direct questions about your age, marital status and children. If you do feel strongly about these “too personal” questions, you can and, indeed, *must* smile first (see “Importance of silence” in this chapter). And then try to explain your position:

对不起, 在 我们 国家, 一般 不 谈论
(sorry, at our country, normally not discuss)

这些问题, 所以我感到不太习惯。
 (these questions, so I feel not too accustomed to)
 咱们说点儿别的, 好吗?
 (we — inclusive form speak a bit other, good?)

I'm sorry, I am not accustomed to talking about these things, because we don't talk about these things at home. Shall we talk about something else?

However, such an approach could be unwise, since, in all probability, this will mean the end of the entire conversation. Most Chinese will likely interpret your explanation as a hint at your unwillingness to engage in any interaction or to "become" one of 咱们 (see "Use of first person pronoun plural" for details). They still believe the motto of 入乡随俗 (enter country follow customs — when in Rome, do as the Romans do). On the other hand, if you happen to talk to some less traditional Chinese, the conversation will survive such a reaction and might even lead to some interesting exchanges afterwards.

Another method worth trying is to prepare yourself a little paragraph with all those details. They don't have to be the true information. After all, this is just a game to play and your Chinese companions are not really interested in all those details. It is like an English everyday greeting. When somebody asks you "how are you?", s/he is not really interested in whether you are well or not. A made-up self-introduction could be along the following lines. You could even chant it in a very flat tone, as if you were a primary school child practising reading aloud:

我叫假大空, 今年二十五岁,
 (I call False Big-Empty, this year 25 years old,)
 还没成家, 也还没有意中人...
 (still not establish home, also still not have dream person)

My name is Big-Empty False. I'm 25 years old. I'm not married, nor is there anybody that I'm in love with ...

This obvious non-serious statement can successfully deliver your message that you are not very keen on discussing those topics and people will usually have a good laugh. Then, if you can think of some safe topics you feel like talking about, and with any luck, your conversation may last for a long time.

There are some other topics that Chinese are very likely to mention during a meeting with foreigners. Most likely, s/he will be asked about place of origin. Eventually, this can lead to a discussion on the place, attractions, food, how long the foreigner has been in China, has s/he adjusted to the food, climate, etc. It is a good idea to say something nice at least about some aspects of your life in China. If, for example, you dislike the food and do not want to be too frank on this topic (a wise decision), a few nice words about the scenery, climate or local architecture would be appreciated.

But in a meeting of cultures which cultural norms should dominate? Is it a matter of "when in Rome do as the Romans do", or are we to display our understanding of

another's culture and play by *their* rules in *our own* country? We ask these questions because we have observed a very interesting cultural phenomenon — a cultural awareness in reverse. Here is the story:

A Chinese friend became upset because he claimed that his Australian colleagues were asking him particularly rude questions about his family and previous work back in China. "Did they suspect me of being a spy?" he quizzed. In fact, his Australian colleagues were just asking these questions to try to be friendly, thinking that it was the Chinese way of being caring; whereas he was warned before he left China that foreigners never ask personal questions.

Things you'd better not talk about in public

Sex, personal health, divorce or woman's physical appearance

Students must know not only what they can talk about, but also what topics they should not mention under any circumstances in a formal situation. Some of these "taboos" are pretty universal. In most cultures, it is not advisable to talk about sex or, say, some health conditions, although if a Chinese greets somebody by asking about their health and the answer is "not very well", then further inquiry will be usually made to offer detailed advice in order to show care for the person. In spite of the relative openness to the questions about one's family life, Chinese are more reluctant than English speakers to mention their family problems — like terminal illness, marriage breakdown or even divorced parents. The open referral to somebody's boyfriends and girlfriends also can sound awkward for most Chinese — this type of relationship is not to be flaunted in public. Neither is it appropriate for men to comment on women's physical appearance, even if you mean to be complimentary. Try your luck and almost definitely, you will be rewarded with the title of 臭流氓 (stinking hoodlum). However, it is quite OK to exclaim how young someone looks for her age (if it has been disclosed).

Religion, political dissent or minority nationalities like Tibetans

One has to remember that China has a rather restrictive political regime, so some topics are strongly disapproved of by the government. By starting a politically sensitive conversation you are likely to embarrass your Chinese hosts or guests. Maybe, in the depth of their hearts they even share many of your ideas and views, but they are unlikely to express these feelings in public — partly due to the fear of persecution, partly out of patriotism ("it's OK for us, but not for foreigners to say nasty things about our country!" — But aren't we all a bit like that?!) Hence, when meeting Chinese for the first time, avoid talking about religion, political dissent, minority nationalities like Tibetans and other politically awkward questions.

Importance of silence

Traditionally, the Chinese have a reputation of being people keen to avoid any confrontation or conflict. Maybe this reputation is somewhat exaggerated, but it is not completely unfounded. Social harmony or, at least, the appearance of social harmony is highly valued by this society. In case of intercultural communication, this seemingly benevolent and well-meaning approach can lead to some side effects and frequent misunderstandings.

There are many ways to avoid saying unpleasant things, and some of them will be discussed in later sections. However, the surest way to say nothing offensive is to remain silent. Hence, silence — often quite awkward, is a common reaction to some inappropriate remarks. Normally a smile or even a laugh accompanies it. The Chinese smile may have a variety of meanings. Indeed, a medium size Chinese dictionary lists 38 different fixed expressions used to describe smiles. Among other things, when somebody feels embarrassed, they are very likely to smile. Hence, when a Chinese employee is told off by the boss, a normal reaction is to smile — a behaviour which looks extremely annoying to unaccustomed western managers and consequently makes an outraged boss even more outraged.

Occasionally silence can be a sign of social position. As mentioned earlier, a high-ranking individual is expected to maintain a low level of verbosity. This is especially true if such a person is surrounded by people who are socially inferior to him. In this case, his (seldom her) silence is a manifestation of his social standing, since his interaction with his inferiors must be kept to the bare minimum. Consequently, it is not uncommon to experience an awkward silence when in the company of Chinese (in particular, socially prominent Chinese) around a formal dining table. The silence or, at least, unwillingness to become engaged in “small talk” is one of the signs of social superiority in China. Verbosity is generally reserved for the minions or the uneducated ignoramus. Notwithstanding this, children and women are expected to remain silent if there are guests at home. “They should be seen and not heard”, as the old English saying goes.

Chinese people are extremely reluctant to say 不 (literally “no”). When you are talking with a Chinese speaker, you might notice that they will constantly nod their heads and frequently say something like “hmm, hmm” to you. A westerner tends to misconstrue such verbal or non-verbal interaction as a sign of *agreement* (perhaps, somewhat qualified, but agreement anyway). Actually, however, this simply means that your Chinese companion is listening to you and your remarks — and nothing else. Indeed, such behaviour is more typical in the case of *disagreement*, so the constant “hmm, hmm, hmm” might even mean something like “you are talking nonsense, but I am listening to you anyway”. The same applies to Chinese 是 normally translated in dictionaries as “yes”, but actually meaning “I hear you well”. In case of *real agreement*, Chinese is likely to use 对 (true, correct) and to be emphatically enthusiastic about your statements and proposals.

The avoidance of saying 不 is exemplified in the following response to a very simple question:

甲: 你 是 从 北 京 来 的 吧?
(you are from Beijing come suggestion marker)

A: You are from Beijing, aren't you?

乙: 我 是 从 天 津 来 的。
(I am from Tianjin come)

B: (No), I am from Tianjin.

On the other hand, if you are talking to a very good friend, the repetition of 不 (*no*) as in “不不不不!”, often used to negate an assumption or a statement, is seen as a soft and gentle way to make one's feelings known.

Approaches to interpersonal relationships

China used to be a Confucian society, that is, a society of omnipresent hierarchy. Fifty years of communist rule greatly changed the situation. For better or worse, Chinese society generally tends to attach less value to hierarchy than, say, the societies of Japan or Korea. Nevertheless, China is still pretty much a hierarchical society, especially if compared to Australia or the USA.

In traditional China, no two individuals could be equal almost by definition. Social standing, education, age, marital status, family background — all these were taken into account to determine their respective positions. There were various ways to indicate the relative standing of two conversation partners, through their verbal and non-verbal interactions (see “Hierarchical markers”). These days many of these old habits have died out, but vestiges are still present in modern Chinese society. In many modern western societies conversation partners in most cases try to hide social distance and pretend to be equal partners even if they are not; but in China hierarchy is seldom disguised. A boss *must* behave like a boss, speak like a boss and be addressed like a boss, while socially junior persons *must* verbally and non-verbally indicate their lower position. For a junior partner such behaviour is not normally associated with humiliation. On the contrary, to show one's readiness to recognise one's relatively low social station and behave accordingly is widely perceived as an indication of good upbringing and modesty.

Kinesic behaviours

Kinesics is the study of the roles of body movements in communication. Some researches have claimed that at least 70% of human interactions are engaged through non-verbal communication. Whether you believe these figures or not, the study of body language should be an important component in language teaching.

Gestures

One of the most common misconceptions about gestures is that they are "natural" and "universal", hence completely comprehensible for people from other cultures. This is true in regards to some gestures, but not to all. Occasionally, the same gesture *can* have quite different meanings in different cultures. Take nodding for example: the Chinese nod their heads to show agreement or simply to indicate that they are listening, even when they do not agree with you, as we have illustrated. The following are some of the common gestures Chinese people tend to make:

Finger-counting

The Chinese can use their fingers to count from 1 to 10. In the market place, some prices will be emphasised by vigorous finger gestures so it is a good idea to learn these in order to avoid confusion and misunderstanding. "Number 1" 一号 can have its special meaning — going to the toilet. Very occasionally, you might come across some Chinese present their "number 2" with an upward action. Do not get offended. It is not a rude gesture.

Finger-pointing

Westerners try to avoid pointing their fingers at anybody. For children, such behaviour is natural, but their parents do their best to discourage them from making these "rude and offensive" gestures. It is rather difficult to imagine a grown-up Australian pointing his/her finger at something and especially at somebody. In China this gesture is not discouraged by education, so it is completely normal to point your finger at something or even somebody strange or interesting. While in China, especially in rural areas, foreigners (still a rarity in many parts of the country) will be constantly pointed at by by-passers, accompanied by the shouting of "外国人, 外国人" (foreigners, foreigners), such behaviour is often perceived by foreigners as rude or, at least, annoying. In general, one must remember that as a foreigner, s/he is certain to generate a great amount of curiosity, so be ready to be closely looked at while you are in public places.

Hand-shaking

Hand-shaking is essentially a western European tradition which has spread across the globe in the last couple of centuries. It is now common in China — almost as common as in, say, Australia. However, there are a few peculiarities which students of Chinese are expected to know. First, when a man meets a woman, he is expected to wait till she initiates the hand-shake and then shakes her hand gently. Second, some Chinese will hold your hand with both of their hands and then give you an emphasised shaking. Normally this is done to express a special degree of intimacy or to convey an emotional support in some special situations (like, say, expressing condolences during funerals).

Before the "western" hand-shake arrived in China some centuries ago, the Chinese had been greeting one another in their own way: to greet somebody, a male

would fold one hand in the other hand, raise them to the level of the chest and then move them up and down a few inches several times. When meeting an individual of superior rank, an inferior would bow reverently and raise his clasped hands to his forehead several times in order to show politeness and respect. This gesture historically had the same practical meaning as a western "hand-shake": it was to demonstrate that a stranger who was greeting you was holding no weapons and, hence, was friendly (or, at the very least, reasonably safe to deal with). In modern usage it can also mean "thank you" and has been adopted by women as well.

Since women were not expected to have concealed weapons, they had a different way of greeting. Instead of folding hands, they would lightly grasp their own left hands on top of their right ones around their waist and bend down their knees as well. These days this gesture is seldom used, but the Chinese know its meaning pretty well.

Toasting

When Chinese drink a toast, they are supposed to look at each other's eyes while clinking their glasses. The junior should lower his/her glass while clinking — a way to show respect to the senior.

Gesture to mean "no, no, no..."

When Chinese want to politely but decisively refuse something, they make a side to side movement of one of their hands in front of themselves, with the palm facing outward; an emphasised version would be to swing both of their hands across each other with a high frequency.

Gesture to mean "come closer, please!"

When you want to suggest somebody come closer, you beckon by using the whole hand in a pulling gesture. This gesture seems to be fairly international and obvious, but in China there is one very important peculiarity. To call somebody, you *must* keep your palm downward! If you do it with your palms upward, as most Australians do, this is considered to be very rude, actually — quite offensive and derogatory (it is used to call a prostitute or a slave).

Gesture to mean "it's great!"

Thumbs up means "it's great". It is a gesture shared with many other cultures that are not aware about the English gesture for "OK".

Gesture to mean "it's bad"

Some Chinese tend to point their little fingers rather than point their thumbs down to indicate that something is bad.

Gesture to express embarrassment

Apart from using a smile to hide their embarrassment or feeling awkward, some Chinese may stick their tongues out when either you or they themselves have done something wrong or have made a *faux pas*. A modified and more "presentable"

version is: instead of putting out their tongue, they close their mouth but lower their chin.

Gesture to indicate "It's me."

Index finger pointing to one's own nose means "It's me."

Gesture to express guarantee or reassurance

Using one palm (usually the right hand) to strike one's own chest means "Leave it with me" or "No problem, I will do it."

Gesture to indicate "I'm thinking hard"

Index finger pointing to the temple for the Chinese means "I am thinking hard", not "you are an idiot".

Gesture to say "shame on you!"

Index finger stroking on one's own cheek for the Chinese means "shame on you!"

Postures

The Chinese way of sitting is not too different from the western one. Many centuries ago, the Chinese used to sit on the floor like many Japanese or Koreans still do. However, after the introduction of the chair, Chinese sitting habits have changed. Nevertheless, there are some minor peculiarities worth noting.

The Chinese saying advises: "站有站相, 坐有坐相" (when stand — stand properly, when sit — sit properly). Like many other peoples, the Chinese consider putting feet up on the desk to be extremely rude. Women do not sit with legs apart, and crossing legs when sitting has been reserved for high-ranking male officials only. Even so, it is usually only in informal situations and when dealing with socially inferiors.

站如松, 坐如钟, 行如风 (stand like pine trees, sit like a clock, walk as wind) — this is how an old Chinese saying describes an ideal posture, but this standard is probably set a bit too high. One can easily see this in Guangzhou, where people wear wooden (these days, plastic) thongs. The endless scraping created by the thousands of thongs dragged along the street creates a constant background noise, quite familiar to every visitor of this city.

Chinese peasants still prefer squatting to sitting. Even in a park or the waiting room of a railway station where there are benches provided, you can still see people squatting rather than sitting on these benches (often with their shoes on). Some Chinese believe that squatting is more relaxing and even better for health than sitting.

Facial expression

Tradition requires prominent Chinese to be in full control of their facial expressions. This is a part of the traditional "gentlemen's upbringing", a way to indicate their own self-control. An old saying insisted that a gentleman would "never demonstrate

sound or colour" — 不露声色. These days such demands are not taken as seriously as in past centuries, but along with low verbosity the seemingly emotionless face is still one of the most common signs of social superiority and prominence in China.

Smiles are much less common in China than in western societies. Indeed, Australian culture is somewhat exceptional in a special emphasis on smiling as a sign of friendliness. In China it is not considered necessary to "wear a smile" while talking to strangers or interacting with others. Occasionally, this shortage of smiles is misunderstood by westerners as a sign of tension or general weariness with life. Sometimes, this is indeed connected with weariness: China is still a very poor country and after 12 hours toiling in paddy fields, not everybody is ready to smile. But in general this peculiarity has more to do with Chinese culture than with the actual difficulties of everyday existence.

Eye contact and gaze

Eye contact is seen as impolite if not menacing behaviour. Children are taught to avoid staring at the eyes of people they are interacting with, especially if with seniors. Looking straight at the eyes is not a sign of openness, but rather of rudeness or even of threat. Unbroken eye contact must be brief, and intermittent eye contact and gesture is essential. But in some social situations, e.g. when Chinese drink a toast at a banquet, they are supposed to look at each other's eyes while clinking their glasses.

Proxemics (distance between speakers)

Physical contact must be avoided between persons of different gender — 男女授受不亲. Even a seemingly innocent touch is seen as impermissible between a man and a woman, unless they are spouses or lovers (and even if they are, such behaviour used to be uncommon in public — although times are changing fast). Therefore, refrain from kissing or embracing somebody when you first meet. Remember that even an Irish pop singer Ronan Keating, formerly of Boyzone, was reported to have been "rejected" by a five-year old Taiwanese girl when he simply tried to kiss her to express his thanks when she presented him with flowers. However, there is a great deal of physical contact between people of the same gender — generally more than considered appropriate in, say, Australia. It is common in China to see people of the same gender putting their arms around friends, or holding hands, or walking arm in arm in public. The human needs for physical closeness 在这儿找齐了 (has been compensated here).

In China, public areas and even private houses simply don't allow people the luxury of enough space to keep a decent distance from one another. Both Chinese dwellings and Chinese cities are very crowded which results in some peculiarities that can make one feel uncomfortable. In some cases you have to literally fight for your place under the sun. Entering a city bus, for example, may look like a "no holds barred" wrestling competition. Queuing up is not necessarily adhered to as a

social norm, and pushing strangers aside near a cashier's window is pretty common behaviour. An interesting observation: when seeing a foreigner in a queue, Chinese often form a queue. Recently the clearly marked yellow line with the eye-catching notice 请在黄线外排队等候 (please wait behind the marked yellow line — one metre from a window) has been introduced in customs, airports or banks but it will take a long time before it becomes the commonly accepted norm in China.

The study of proxemics has been taken very seriously in China. A special television program has been made and broadcast nationwide as part of a special campaign to educate people how to behave. According to the program, research has claimed that there are four types of 人际距离 (human interaction spaces):

- 亲密距离 (intimate space) refers to the space between lovers, spouses and very close friends. The appropriate distance is 0–0.45m;
- 个人距离 (personal space) refers to the space between ordinary friends. The appropriate distance is 0.45–1m;
- 社交距离 (social space) refers to the space between strangers in social interactions. The appropriate distance is 1m–3m;
- 公众距离 (public space) refers to the space between strangers in formal situations like public speech or stage performance. The appropriate distance is 3.5–7m.

Term of address

In classical Chinese language, the second person pronouns are used very sparingly to avoid being rude and the third person pronouns are very vague compared with their English equivalents. The situation is different in modern Chinese, but it still has some important vestiges of the past. In general, from a foreign student's perspective, the correct way of addressing somebody is one of the most difficult and tricky parts of Chinese speech etiquette. In comparison to the western English speaking tendency towards informality, Chinese seem to have a wider range of situations where they have to address people according to formal rules. For example, English speaking westerners asking a stranger for directions start by saying "Excuse me, ..."; whereas in China, you have to address the stranger with a title before you can say "请问, (please ask — excuse me)..." (see "Use of second person pronouns" for examples). Addressing strangers can be a difficulty for beginning Chinese students. (See "Titles" for details.)

Use of first person pronoun plural²

In modern Chinese, we do not have to worry about cases for pronouns. 我们, for example, can mean "we", "us" or even "our" under certain circumstances.

Chinese has two forms of first person pronoun plural — inclusive 咱们 and exclusive 我们:

咱们	说	点儿	别的。	好吗?
(we — inclusive form	speak	a bit	other,	good?)

Shall we talk about something else?

By using inclusive 咱们, the speaker includes the person(s) being spoken to as a member of the speaker's group, as "one of us", so that the distance between the two sides have been lessened and some intimacy has been created.

Another culture-conditioned peculiarity is the Chinese practice of using plural forms of the first person pronouns. Chinese tend to use the plural form whereas English speakers would normally use the singular in the following situations:

When followed by the nouns that have collective meanings:

我们家 literally "our family" but really means "my family"

我们学校 literally "our school" but really means "my school"

我们公司 literally "our company" but really means "my company".

However, in formal situations like negotiating an agreement or in newspaper writing, Chinese people use the abbreviated form — 我校 (my school), 我公司 (my company) or even 我国 (my country). 我 here actually indicates "(it is) our side" as opposed to "your side".

A strategy to avoid conflict:

甲: 去 喝 杯 咖啡 吧?

(go drink measure word coffee suggestion marker)

A: Shall we go and have some coffee?

乙: 我们 不 去 花 那 冤枉 钱。

(we* not go spent that not worthwhile money)

B: I won't waste money like that.

* Although it is B who does not want to waste money, by using "we", B appears not to conflict with A and make it sound as if neither A nor B is willing to spend money unwisely. In China, drinking coffee in a coffee shop can be considered extravagant, since this beverage is *very* expensive. Most Chinese are understandably reluctant to spend some 18 *yuan* just for a cuppa — more than the average daily income of many Chinese urban dwellers.

A strategy to create a sense of warmth and intimacy:

我们那一位 literally "our that person" but really means "my husband/wife"

我们儿子 literally "our son" but really means "my son"

我们女儿 literally "our daughter" but really means "my daughter".

You can say 我那位 (my husband/wife), 我儿子 (my son) or 我女儿 (my daughter), but for a Chinese speaker it does not sound as warm as using "our ...". If you visit a farm in China and get on very well with the family, you can start asking questions this way:

我们 有 多少 地?

(we have how many land)

How many acres do you have?

The Chinese will appreciate your warm approach and will not interpret this as your intention of taking over their land.

Use of second person pronouns

As mentioned very briefly at the beginning of this section, since ancient times the Chinese have been normally using titles as a polite substitute for second person pronouns. In Classical Chinese second person pronouns had only very limited use, while a senior person, whether in respect of age or social rank, was normally addressed by their title. In modern Chinese to address somebody with *ni* 你 (neutral you) or *nin* 您 (polite you) is perfectly OK, but the titles are still used very widely — much more widely than in most English speaking countries. Often 您 or the surname is accompanied by the title, which makes the sentence sound more polite:

老大爷, (您) 今年 多 大 年纪 啦?
(old-big-grandpa, you this year how big age softener)
(as a greeting) Hello!

吴 教授, 久 仰, 久 仰!
(Wu professor, for a long time respect for a long time respect)
(as a greeting) It's a great honour to meet you!

Hierarchical markers

Because Chinese society was originally very hierarchical, the Chinese language is not short of hierarchy markers (indeed, it has a multitude of them). For most of the period since 1949, the Chinese government has tried hard to establish a more equal and fairer society and most of those markers almost have become obsolete. In recent years however, there has been a revival of traditional culture, and hierarchy markers have made somewhat of a return³. The table below lists some honorific and self-deprecating terms, which are usually used in formal situations, letter-writing etc.

尊称/他称 honorific (ref. to others)	自谦/自称 self-deprecating	中性称谓 neutral
(您) 贵姓? (Your) <u>honourable</u> surname?	免贵姓...; 敝姓... <u>Removing honourable</u> (my) surname (is)...; <u>My humble</u> surname (is)...	你姓什么? — 我姓... What's your surname? — My surname is ...
贵校 (your) <u>honourable</u> school	我校; 敝校 my school; <u>my humble</u> school	你们学校 — 我们学校 your school — our school
贵公司 (your) <u>honourable</u> company	我公司; 敝公司 my company; <u>my humble</u> company	你们公司 — 我们公司 your company — our company
令尊 (your) <u>exalted</u> father	N/A: you're supposed to show respect to your parents all the time	你父亲/爸爸 — 我父亲/爸爸 your father/my father

尊称/他称 honorific (ref. to others)	自谦/自称 self-deprecating	中性称谓 neutral
令堂 (your) <u>exalted</u> mother	N/A: you're supposed to show respect to your parents all the time	你母亲/妈妈 — 我母亲/妈妈 your mother/my mother
令郎 (your) <u>exalted</u> son	犬子 puppy (to Chinese, referring to somebody as a pet is usually not endearing but deprecating)	你儿子 — 我儿子 your son — my son
令爱 (your) <u>exalted</u> daughter	小女 (my) <u>minor</u> daughter	你儿子 — 我儿子 your daughter — my daughter
您先生 your <u>gentleman</u>	我老头儿 my <u>old man</u> (informal)	你丈夫/爱人 — 我丈夫/爱人 your husband/love — my husband/love
您夫人/太太 your <u>madam</u>	我老婆 my <u>old woman</u> (informal)	你妻子/爱人 — 我妻子/爱人 your wife/love — my wife/love
您在哪儿高就? Where do you do (your) <u>high</u> (level) work?	我在...混饭吃。 I <u>earn my living</u> at... (informal)	你在哪儿工作? — 我在...工作。 Where do you work? — I work at...
高见 (your) <u>high</u> opinion	拙见; 愚见 (my) <u>clumsy</u> opinion; (my) <u>silly</u> opinion	你的意见 — 我的意见 your opinion — my opinion
拜读 <u>respectful</u> to read	斧正; 惠正; 过目; 审阅 <u>correct</u> with an axe; <u>correct</u> as a favour; look over to check; <u>approve</u>	看 read
大作 <u>great</u> work	拙作 <u>clumsy</u> work	你的文章 — 我的文章 your article — my article

Titles

While English has hardly more than a dozen general titles (Mr, Mrs, Ms, Miss, Sir, Madam, Professor and some others), the Chinese boast a bewildering array of titles.

A Chinese person named Wu Xiaoping can be addressed as:

- 同志 (Comrade)
 - 吴同志 (Wu Comrade — Comrade Wu)
 - 小平同志 (Xiaoping Comrade — Comrade Xiaoping)
 - 吴小平同志 (Wu Xiaoping Comrade — Comrade Wu Xiaoping)
 - 这 / 那位男同志 (this/that male comrade)
 - 这 / 那位女同志 (this/that female comrade)
- 师傅 (Master [of a trade])
 - 吴师傅 (Wu Master — Master Wu)
- 先生 (Mr or Sir)
 - 吴先生 (Wu Mr — Mr Wu)
 - 吴小平先生 (Wu Xiaoping Mr — Mr Wu Xiaoping)
- 夫人 / 太太 (Mrs or Madam)
 - 吴夫人 / 太太 (Wu Mrs — Mrs Wu)
 - 吴小平夫人 / 太太 (Wu Xiaoping Mrs — Mrs Wu Xiaoping)
- 这 / 那位女士 (this/that Ms)
 - 吴小平女士 (Wu Xiaoping Ms — Ms Wu Xiaoping)
- 小姐 (Miss)
 - 吴小姐 (Wu Miss — Miss Wu)
 - 吴小平小姐 (Wu Xiaoping Miss — Miss Wu Xiaoping)
- 吴小平博士 (Wu Xiaoping Dr — Dr Wu Xiaoping)
- 医生 / 大夫 (Doctor)
 - 吴医生 / 大夫 (Wu Doctor — Doctor Wu)
 - 吴小平医生 / 大夫 (Wu Xiaoping Doctor — Doctor Wu Xiaoping)
- 教授 (Professor)
 - 吴教授 (Wu Professor — Professor Wu)
 - 吴小平教授 (Wu Xiaoping Professor — Professor Wu Xiaoping)
- 老吴 (Old Wu)
- 吴老 (Wu Old — the distinguished Wu)
- 小吴 (Little Wu)
- 校长 (school head — the head of schools as well as universities)
 - 吴校长 (Wu School Master or Wu Vice-Chancellor or Wu Duputy Vice-Chancellor)
 - 吴小平校长 (Wu Xiaoping School Master, Wu Xiaoping Vice-Chancellor or Wu Xiaoping Duputy Vice-Chancellor)
- 老师 (Teacher)
 - 吴老师 (Wu Teacher)
 - 吴小平老师 (Wu Xiaoping Teacher)

There are virtually thousands of possible titles. To make them teachable, these have been divided into four categories:

General titles

同志(Comrade)

Many Chinese in mainland China must miss "those good old days of the 1950s" when they could use just one universal title 同志 (comrade) to address virtually everybody except for those "counter-revolutionaries". As one can see from the list above, 同志 can be used by itself, combined with a surname, given name or a full name, or can have its genderised forms although you have to add a determiner "this or that". 同志 has been "out of favour" for a long time, but it has never completely disappeared. Recently, it seems to have managed to make a small comeback. Very recently, 同志 has won popularity in the gay world.

师傅(Master [of a trade])

This *comradisation* campaign did not result in the eternal domination of 同志. Soon it had to give way to another popular title 师傅 (Master [of a trade]). This happened when the working class was officially proclaimed to be the "leading class" in 1966, the year when the Cultural Revolution broke out. This change had political connotations, since 师傅 was, linguistically, even more "revolutionary" than 同志 — it didn't need to have gender differentiation. Everybody could be addressed as 师傅 provided they belonged to the "revolutionary camp".

先生、夫人、太太、女士、小姐(Mr/Sir, Mrs, Ms, Miss)

With the exception of gender-neutral 先生, all these titles can be applied to women only. For a while, they used to be considered as the titles reserved for "stinking bourgeoisie" only. These forms of address almost became extinct between the late 1950s and early 1980s. They only managed to make a comeback when China decided to open its door to the world again in early 1980s, and embarked on an ambitious program of domestic reforms of an increasingly capitalist nature. Now these old titles are in vogue again.

先生 (Mr/Sir) if used on its own can mean "teacher" as well, usually referring to those of great learning. Therefore, an academically superior female can be called 先生 as well.

One thing to be wary about when using them is to remember the correct order — in Chinese, titles follow surnames whereas in English, titles lead surnames. A gentleman named Wu is 吴先生 — literally Wu Mr, not 先生吴 — literally Mr Wu, so are the 吴夫人、吴太太、吴女士 and 吴小姐.

Chinese women usually do not change their surname after marriage — therefore, do not automatically assume that 吴夫人 or 吴太太's husband is 吴先生, because Chinese also use "maiden (sur)name + 夫人 or 太太" to address married women.

小姐 (Miss) in the last two decades, used to be the most loved title for women — if you could make yourself address a fifty year-old female hotel manager as 小姐, you would have a very good chance of getting a big discount on your bill. However,

one must be careful: in recent years, "western spiritual pollution" has polluted the title 小姐 as well — at least in some spheres. In the business world it has almost evolved into the substitution for 三陪 (three-accompany — accompany to eat, to drink and to sing Karaoke, to sauna or to sleep) — equivalent to call girls. Nowadays, the safest way to address young women working in hotels or bars is 服务员 (service person — chamber maid or waitress), a once popular old "revolutionary" term.

小+姓(Little + Surname)、老+姓(Old + Surname)、姓+老(Surname + Old)

In an adult world, these titles have been created as the least politics-conscious and hierarchy-conscious way to address each other among acquaintances. You can basically address anybody younger or your same age as 小+姓 (Little + Surname), anybody older as 老+姓 (Old + Surname). Being old in China has not been a bad thing at all until very recently when the contemporary western "cult of youthfulness" began to penetrate China as well. In "feudal" China as well as in those days under Mao, when everybody was eating from 铁饭碗 (iron rice bowl), being addressed as 老 gave you the entitlement to boss others around. When you reach 60 and have established yourself well in the social ladder, you might be addressed as 姓+老 (Surname + Old — Distinguished). 老 sometimes even carries certain sentimental value — 老公 (Old man — husband) is often used by modernised young people to address their husbands, even when their husbands are still in their early 20s. 老外 (Old foreigner — foreigner) is another such term, an endearing name to replace derogatory "foreigner devil" or "big nose". Others include 老伴儿 (Old companion — long-time companion), 老两口儿 (old couple), 老爸 (Old dad — Dad), 老妈 (Old mum — Mum), 老同学 (Old classmate[s] — long-time classmate[s]), 老同事 (Old colleague[s] — long-time colleague[s]), 老同志 (Old comrade[s] — those who join the revolution for a long time), 老革命 (Old revolutionary — those who join the revolution for a long time) and 老战友 (Old comrades-in-arms — mates).

小朋友 (Little friend[s])

This one is reserved for kids only. Any children in or younger than primary school age can be addressed this way.

Bureaucratic position titles

The very same bureaucracy which once initiated the *comradisation* campaign of the 1950s, soon developed all sorts of official titles, and now they are expecting you to address them according to the official positions they hold. Like bureaucrats everywhere in the world, they are very "considerate" in training people how to address them properly — in most cases, you simply put a 长 (Head) as a suffix to the very last word of whatever organisations they are in charge of:

(公安部) 部长	(Public Security Ministry) Ministry Head
(公安局) 局长	(Public Security Bureau) Bureau Head
(外事科) 科长	(Foreign Affairs Section) Section Head
(派出所) 所长	(Police Substation) Substation Head
(工厂) 厂长	(Industry Factory) Factory Head

(大寨村) 村长 (Dazhai Village) Village Head

There are a few exceptions though:

(北京大学) 校长 (Beijing University) University Head

(留学生办公室) 主任 (Foreign Students Office) Director

(中文系) 主任 (Chinese Department) Director

(北方公司) 经理 (Northern Company) Manager but a general manager
总经理 will be addressed as "Surname + 总"

Another interesting peculiarity of Chinese bureaucratic "polite style" must be mentioned. "Deputy whoever" can only be addressed by their surnames or full names followed by the position title for the Head. For example, if somebody is addressed as 吴校长 or 吴小平校长, s/he is more likely to be a deputy whereas if addressed as 校长 — without anything else attached, s/he is definitely *the* Head. The difference between a "boss" and a "deputy-boss" is hinted at by having or not having a surname before the title, but the title is the same (in conversation, not in bureaucratic writing). Of course, there is a word for "deputy" in the Chinese language — 副 (a prefix meaning "deputy"), but for the sake of politeness it is never used during face-to-face communication with deputies. The personnel office distinguishes between a "departmental head" and a "deputy departmental head" in terms of its organisation charts. In interactions (especially in oral ones) this difference must be referred to only in a subtle, indirect way. After all, every good deputy believes him/herself to be just a boss in waiting!

Professional and occupational titles

The difference in concept between professional and occupational is approximately the same as in English. In China, you can address anybody engaged in professional endeavours by their professional title alone — in most cases you do not have to remember their names or surnames:

教授 (Professor)

老师 (Teacher — a most useful title to address anybody working in an educational world — although there is a Chinese equivalent to "lecturer", it is never used as a way of addressing people.)

医生 / 大夫 (Doctor — medical)

护士长 (Head Nurse — not ordinary nurse)

律师 (Lawyer — solicitor or barrister)

an exception — 工程师 (industry project master — Engineer[s]) will be addressed as "Surname + 工"

As for those working in occupational fields, 师傅 (Master [of a trade]) is the magic word. Any kind of technicians, taxi drivers, electricians, or people working in service industry can be simply addressed as 师傅 — perhaps that is why young waitresses or young female shop assistants are not particularly keen on this title. However, one has to remember that hierarchy of occupations in China might be very different from

western pattern. While a plumber in Australia may earn big money, in China, there is not even a proper word to describe the occupation, which is normally seen as badly paid and nearly humiliating.

Kinship titles and their "extended" usage

Culturally speaking, the Chinese family system is still built on "an authoritarian structure in which authority is determined by seniority, sex and the closeness of the patrilineal relationship. In each line of descent the older outranks the younger, and in each generation males usually outrank females."⁴ A graphic expression of absolute male dominance lies in the character for ancestor 祖 — "in the two elements that compose the character, a left-hand one meaning 'sacred' and a right-hand one was originally a drawing of an erect phallus and, even in its modern, squared-off form, still preserves the shape."⁵ Broad and sweeping, any relatives related to the father's male side are considered 家庭成员 (family members), while anybody related to the female side (i.e., your mother's side and your father's female side) is just 社会关系 (social contacts). This has created a very complicated and confusing system of kinship titles so even the Chinese who were brought up in a city environment feel lost by those titles. Fortunately, most students of Chinese as a foreign language do not have to deal with all these in practice. It looks like the current "one child" policy will eventually abolish titles like brother, sister, uncle, aunt, nephew or niece.

In Chinese it is impossible to say "my brother" or "my sister" because there is no common relationship that older and younger brothers, or older and younger sisters, have with you.⁶

You need different words for

older brother	哥哥
younger brother	弟弟
older sister	姐姐
younger sister	妹妹

If you have more than one older brother or sister, you rank your *older* siblings according to their seniority — 大哥 / 姐 (big older brother/sister), 二哥 / 姐 (second older brother/sister), 三哥 / 姐 (third older brother/sister)... However, it applies to the older siblings only! Younger brothers and sisters are called by their first/given names (they are socially junior, so they can be addressed in such a way). At the same time, people who address their *older* brothers/sisters by the name are considered uncivilised. Needless to say, it is completely out of the question to address one's parents by their name.

The English words "uncle" and "aunt" are even more difficult to translate, since in China there is a great number of different "uncles" and "aunts":

伯父 — your father's elder brother(s)

叔叔 — your father's younger brother(s)

舅舅 — your mother's brother(s) — older or younger does not matter, because they are not part of the family

- 姑父 — your father's sister(s)' husband
 姨父 — your mother's sister(s)' husband
 姑姑 — your father's sister(s) — again, older or younger does not matter, because they are not part of the family
 姨妈 — your mother's sister(s)
 伯母 — your father's elder brother(s)' wife
 婶婶 — your father's younger brother(s)' wife
 舅妈 — your mother's brother(s)' wife

There are also regional variations to the above list. And there is no single word for "grandpa", "grandma", "father-in-law", "mother-in-law", "nephew" or "niece" in Chinese either. You must distinguish between the paternal and maternal side and seniority etc.

English speakers often find it somewhat strange when Chinese use kinship titles to address strangers. You can basically address:

- anybody who is about your grandparents' age as
 (老)大爷 ([old] big paternal grandpa) or (老)大娘 ([old] big mother) by adults
 or
 (老)爷爷 ([old] paternal grandpa) or (老)奶奶 ([old] paternal grandma) by children;
- anybody who is older than your parents as
 大伯 (big uncle — father's older brother; 伯伯 pronounced "bǎi" here) or 大妈 (big mum — wife of father's older brother) by adults or
 叔叔 (uncle — father's younger brother) or 阿姨 (aunt — mother's sister) by children;
 BUT
 to older colleagues of your parents, you, as an adult or as a child, address them as 伯伯 (uncle — father's older brother; 伯伯 pronounced "bǎibǎi" here) or 阿姨 (aunt — mother's sister)
- anybody who is younger than your parents as
 大叔 (big uncle — father's younger brother) or 大婶儿 (big aunt — wife of father's younger brother) by adults or
 叔叔 (uncle — father's younger brother) or 阿姨 (aunt — mother's sister) by children;
 BUT
 to younger colleagues of your parents, you, as an adult or as a child, address them as 叔叔 (uncle — father's younger brother) or 阿姨 (aunt — mother's sister)
- parents of your boy/girl friend as
 伯父 (uncle father, a formal way to address your father's older brother) or 伯母 (aunt mother, a formal way to address the wife of your father's older brother)
- anybody who is about your age as
 大哥 (big brother) or 大姐 (big sister),

but educated people tend to use neutral terms like 同志 (Comrade — unisex), 先生 (Sir) or 小姐 (Miss)

- any children as
 小弟弟 (little younger brother) or 小妹妹 (little younger sister)
 although 小朋友 (little friend[s]) is/are more often used
 爱人 (love person — spouse) is a very sweet term in mainland China but in Taiwan, it means “mistress” only; so be careful whom you are talking with.
 If you do not know a proper title — no need to be in despair. The “general titles” section is a good start.

Use of first/given names

Every Chinese is too familiar with the joke about three different titles a pop star has used to address her mentor. Let's say that her honourable mentor was named 吴小平 (Wu Xiaoping):

- 吴老师 (Teacher Wu) was used when the future star still needed to attend the mentor's classes
- 老吴 (Old Wu) came to be used when the would-be star published her first album
- 小平 (Xiaoping — the mentor's first name only) is now used because the singer has established herself in the music world.

This story has been repeated by millions of mentors to remind their pupils not to behave in such an ungrateful way. As it is easy to guess, the use of titles by that star reflects her diminishing respect toward her teacher.

In China, the use of first names is very uncommon, compared to most western societies. Basically, only close friends address one another with first names. First names are also used by parents while talking to their children or by older brothers and sisters to their younger siblings. Although it was not the case in the old days, now spouses also use first names while talking to one another. However, addressing a socially superior person with his/her first name is out of the question, even within one's own family. This is considered to be very rude, almost unthinkable.

Chinese full names usually have been composed of three Chinese characters — one character for the surname, and two characters for the given name (there are a few two-character surnames as well, but they are quite rare). However, it is increasingly a fashion these days to have a given name consisting of just one character. In such a case, both one-character family names and one-character given names (two characters together) must be used in social interactions. Unless you play “cool”, you might make a fool of yourself by addressing somebody using only his/her one-character given name, even in situations where you are entitled to use given names.

As has been mentioned above, Chinese names start with the surname. However, the western (more precisely, English) habit of putting the “first name” first has greatly influenced those Chinese who deal with foreigners, especially amongst those young

educated urban dwellers who consider themselves "liberated" and "free" (Chinese bohemians are a good example). When introducing him/herself, such a person can often re-arrange his/her name according to the English pattern. This attempt at meeting "international standards" can be quite misleading, since you occasionally do not know whether your interlocutor follows Chinese or English tradition.

Use of full names

Apart from very official situations, English speaking westerners seldom use full names (surname + given name) in their everyday communications, although it is more common in the UK than in Australia and the US. In China the situation is different. For example, it is almost the only way for students to address each other (apart from nicknames they enjoy giving each other). Former classmates will address one another in such a way for decades after the graduation, even till their death.

After you join the workforce, you also often address your new acquaintances and new co-workers of approximately your age by using their full names, although titles like "Little" or "Old" are preferred and, indeed, recommended. It is misleading to advise students that using full names is a way to show respect. In most cases it is a way to tell people that we are not close friends, at least, not yet. As we just mentioned, you also address those people by their full names when they have only two characters in their names.

Rules of politeness

Living in a multicultural society, Australians, for example, have unconsciously got used to a wide variety of culturally conditioned behaviours in any given situation. Individuals who come into contact with other cultural groups may easily adopt their attitudes and reactions, and having parents from different cultures is nothing unusual for Australian kids. Therefore the acceptance or at least tolerance to different cultural norms may be said to be fairly high in Australia.

This exposure to other cultures greatly assists Australian teachers who want to explain another culture, behaviour, language or a particular idiom. Just a few minutes of prior questioning in class about what people would do in any given situation should enable the class to see that there are many and varied possibilities of responses in a multicultural society. A Chinese version is just one more.

What may be more difficult to teach is the fact that Chinese society is much more homogenous than Australian society. This means that in Chinese culture there are more expectations held in common about what is correct and therefore a higher expectation that people would behave in the "proper" way. So, whether greeting, inviting, giving advice, complaining, making queries or cajoling, students need some practice using the appropriate response, so that it becomes more or less automatic, at least for the most important things.

There are a few basic differences between Chinese and western approaches to politeness:

- In most cultures politeness involves a measure of flattery, attempts to elevate the partner to some higher social position. The Chinese way of being polite often (indeed, normally) demands that both communicators not only extol the virtues of their conversation partner but also "downgrade" themselves. (See earlier examples, and later in "Complimenting — response").
- The general sense of hierarchy, so typical of Chinese culture, influences the rules of politeness as well. There are some peculiar ways of talking to people who are of very high standing, while talking to social inferiors also has its own specific markers. For example, it is perfectly OK to greet a child by asking their age or name, but the same approach is not permissible when dealing with adults. However, to greet people over sixty years by asking them their age is again recommended but with a totally different wording.
- To borrow Wierzbicka's expression, Chinese culture also values involvement and cordiality rather than distance and "polite pessimism"⁷.
- In personal interactions, the Chinese tend to expect reciprocity more often than most westerners. A proverbial "good Samaritan" is somewhat less common in China.

An important part of the polite language strategy is deliberate "softening" of speech, which makes your remarks sound less demanding and persisting. There are a few tricks commonly employed by Chinese speakers to soften their speech⁸:

- **duplicating some verbs**
- **inserting** — (one — *once*, it literally means "do something just once", indicating the action is of short duration) **between a duplicated one-syllable verb**
- **putting** 一下 (one hit — *once*, again it literally means "do something just once", indicating the action is of short duration) **after a verb — either one-syllable or multi-syllable verbs**
- **with some verbs one can also use** 一会儿 (for a moment) or 些时候 (for some time) **to tone down the voice**

Let's compare the following examples:

- A1 这 事儿 你 还 得 等。
(this matter you still have to wait)
For this matter, you still have to wait.
- A2 这 事儿 你 还 得 等 等。
(this matter you still have to wait wait)
For this matter, you still have to wait a bit.
- A3 这 事儿 你 还 得 等 一 等。
(this matter you still have to wait one wait)
For this matter, you still have to wait a bit.

- A4 这 事儿 你 还 得 等 一 下.
 (this matter you still have to wait one hit)
 For this matter, you still have to wait a bit.
- A5 这 事儿 你 还 得 等 一 会 儿.
 (this matter you still have to wait a moment)
 For this matter, you still have to wait for a while (for hours).
- A6 这 事儿 你 还 得 等 些 时 候.
 (this matter you still have to wait for some time)
 For this matter, you still have to wait for some time (for days, weeks or even months).
- B1 这 事儿 我 们 还 得 研 究⁹.
 (this matter we still have to research)
 For this matter, we still have to look into it.
- B2 这 事儿 我 们 还 得 研 究 研 究.
 (this matter we still have to research research)
 For this matter, we still have to look into it.
- B3 这 事儿 我 们 还 得 研 究 一 下.
 (this matter we still have to research one hit)
 For this matter, we still have to look into it.
- B4 这 事儿 我 们 还 得 研 究 一 会 儿.
 (this matter we still have to research a moment)
 For this matter, we still have to discuss for a while (for hours).
- B5 这 事儿 我 们 还 得 研 究 些 时 候.
 (this matter we still have to research for some time)
 For this matter, we still have to discuss for some time (for days, weeks or even months).

A1 and B1 are typical stern looking bureaucrat's responses while the rest can come from a sympathetic mouth.

- (一)点儿 (one bit — a little amount of) **often used with some verbs to soften the tone of speech:**

- a) 您 吃 什么?
 (you — polite form eat what)
 Can I help you?
- b) 你 吃 点 儿 什么?
 (you eat bit what)
 Can I help you?

A and B are both taking orders. A can sound quite bored with his/her job being a waiter/waitress, even though s/he is using the polite form of "you", whereas even though B is not using the polite form of "you", his/her tone makes the customer(s) feel welcomed.

- putting polite noises like 啊 (similar to English *ah*) and its variations after a vocative

甲 你 好!
(you good)

A: Hi!

乙: 你 好!
(you good)

B: Hi!

甲: 你 好 啊*!
(you good ah)

A: How ARE you?

乙: 好 啊*, 好 啊* 是 哪 阵 风儿
(good ah good ah, is which wind
把 您 (给) 吹 回来 了? !
ba-structure you — polite form blow back)

B: Great! What has brought you back?!

See the difference? Because in everyday speech, Chinese tend to use a lot of such polite noises in order to sound nice, we should train our students' ears to get used to them. We can get students to practise using them at a very early stage, say, on the very first day — do not worry about how to write those characters, just use the Pinyin form:

甲: Shéi a#?
(who ah)

A: Who is it?

乙: Wo a#.
(me ah)

B: (It's) me.

To be pedantic, all the three 啊* mentioned above should be pronounced as "ua" and the two a# should be "ia". But most students usually develop their awareness of those variations naturally with some exposure to the language and do not seem too much bothered by the variations. It is not wrong to pronounce them all as "a" anyway. At a much later stage, students will appreciate being given a charter to explain the variations. So here we are:

if followed by a, e, i, o, u	a ia 呀
if followed by u, ao, ou	a ua 哇
if followed by -n	a na 哪
if followed by -ng	a nga

Greetings — response

With one exception, Chinese has no time-specific greetings, like English "Good morning", "Good afternoon", "Good evening". The exception is "早" (Morning). All other greetings can be used almost at any time of the day.

Many foreigners believe that the Chinese way to say "Good day" is 你好 — at least, most textbooks say so. However, 你好 is not the most authentic Chinese way of greeting — in the old days it used to be quite unusual, and until recently it had been reserved as a way to greet foreigners. In everyday life it sounded a bit strange and pretentious. However, in the last few decades it is becoming more popular as a nice, polite, neutral greeting. These days shop assistants, telephone operators, and other employees of the service industry use it a lot.

There is one peculiar feature in a Chinese person's telephone conversation. There is no commonly accepted definition on who should start the actual conversation. Hence, it is not uncommon to hear the person on the other end of line keep on saying "喂、喂、喂..." (Hi, hi, hi...), usually with a very strong nasal sound. This "exchange" could last for a minute or two between the Chinese themselves. The simplest way out of such a situation is to start the actual conversation, whether you are a caller or a receiver.

Nevertheless, there is a considerable variety of more authentically Chinese ways of greetings:

吃饭了? (Have you eaten?)

is a grim reminder that for millennia famine or, at least, shortage of food has been a part of everyday life for a majority of the Chinese. Some foreigners could be a bit perplexed by this question and even start providing their Chinese partners with data on the place and quality of their last meal. Remember: like good old "How do you do?", this is a polite question, a way to greet somebody, so no lengthy answer is necessary and indeed advisable. If you have eaten, the answer is easy — 吃了。(eaten). If you have not, you can respond in a few different ways, depending on how close you are:

(neutral)

还 没 有。(with a smile)

(still not have)

Not yet.

(friendly)

还 没 呢!

(still not polite noise)

Not yet.

这 就 去!

(this (moment) emphatic go)

(I'll) go in a minute.

(very friendly)

怎么, 你 那儿 有 什么 好 吃 的?

(why? you there have any good eat of)

So, you've got something nice for me?

Quite often, out of politeness, your Chinese associates will either tend to "advise" (see "Giving advice") you to 快去吧! (quickly go [to get something to eat]) or even "invite" you to join them. It is especially true if you are a single male and they have family living nearby. They almost feel obligated to 关心 (care about) you — the "lonely, lack of warmth of family life" 单身汉 (bachelors). But even so, do not be too ready to accept the invitation. You have to wait until the third invitation issues or an invitation with a definite date attached to it (see "Invitations/offers ..."). Mind you, this greeting is normally used around mealtime only.

上哪儿去呀? (Where to?)

is another seemingly obtrusive question you are not expected to answer truly. You can tell something simple and vague, something like 出去 (going out), and then either go your own way or proceed to the conversation if you are in the mood.

上班去呀? or 下班了? (Going to work?/Have finished work?)

again must be answered briefly, and without detail. A typical response is to basically repeat the question — 上班去。or 下班了。but change the punctuation. First, your conversation partner is not going to check if you are a reliable employee; second, you are free to say "hmm" even when you are rushing for a date. Other similar sorts of greetings are:

上课去呀? or 下课了? (Going to class? or Have finished class?)

上学去呀? or 放学了? (Going to school? or Have finished school?)

买菜去呀? or 买回来了? (Going to buy vegetable? or Have bought back?)

出去呀? or 回来了? (Going out? or Have come back?)

你多大了? (How old are you?)

Chinese do greet people by asking somebody's age, but not to everyone. Age is a legitimate question when greeting a child or anybody either obviously younger or much older than you — usually anybody over 70 — otherwise, don't. As for your peers, you have to wait until the conversation warms up a bit. Each age group has its own wording for asking the same question:

- to ask a child or somebody much younger than you, you say:
你(今年)多大了? (How big are you [this year]?) or
你(今年)几岁了? (How many years do you have [this year]?)
- to ask somebody much older than you, usually over 70, you say:
老大爷, 您(今年)多大年纪了? (Old grandpa, how big is your age [this year]?)
or
老大爷, 您(今年)高寿? (Old grandpa, how high is your longevity [this year]?)
- to ask your peers, especially the opposite sex, you have to ask indirectly:
你是哪一年的? (Which year were you born/were you graduated?) or

你是哪一年毕业的? (Which year were you graduated?) or
你是属什么的? (Which year of animal do you belong to?)

It always pays to know the order of the 12 animals so you can quickly calculate how much older or younger your partner is. So here is the order:

鼠 (rat)、牛 (ox)、虎 (tiger)、兔 (rabbit)、龙 (dragon)、蛇 (snake)、马 (horse)、羊 (goat)、猴 (monkey)、鸡 (rooster)、狗 (dog)、猪 (pig)

你叫什么名字? (What's your name?)

You use this only to greet a child or if you manage to attract police attention and get them to check on you. In other situations, you neither ask a stranger's name nor initiate a self-introduction as some textbooks suggest. Ideally, you learn somebody's name only when/if introduced by a common acquaintance. In very casual situations like in a crowded party, where it is impossible for the host to introduce all the guests, you might try out a very polite form:

甲: 您贵姓?

(What's your honourable surname?)

乙: 免贵姓吴, 口天吴。

(Removing (my) "honourable" surname is Wu, mouth-sky Wu — as English people spell their names alphabetically, Chinese people "spell" the Chinese characters either by "dissembling" the character into parts or putting the character in a commonly-known set phrase to indicate which Chinese character they mean, because in many cases, a same sound can represent quite a few completely different Chinese characters.)

怎么样? or 忙吗?

These are English equivalents to "How are you?" or "Busy?". They are as commonly used as in English speaking countries.

您是哪儿的? or 您是从哪儿来的? (Where are you from? or Where do you come from?)

This is used by strangers to start a social conversation. Depending on different occasions, the response can be "I come from Australia", "I am from Canberra" or "I am from the Australian National University".

Some forms of greeting can sound a bit bizarre for modern western sensibilities, like the following quite commonly used comments and questions:

- 你胖了! (You have got more weight!)

Whatever Hollywood stars believe these days, most Chinese, relying on their historical experience, are still quite sure that being fat is good for your health (after all, only officials, merchants or, later, top cadres could afford to be fat until very recently). One has to recognise that the youngsters have been "corrupted by the western decadency", so they are beginning to question the age-old equation of fatness with prosperity and health.

- 你这件衣服真好看！(How beautiful your clothes are!)

and then, the next questions would be:

- 你在哪儿买的？(Where did you buy it?)
- 多少钱？(How much?)

Other potentially embarrassing questions include:

- 你结婚了没有？(Are you married?)
- 有孩子了（没有）？(Do you have any children?)
几个？(How many?)
男孩儿女孩儿？(Boys or girls?)
- 你（一个月）挣多少钱？(How much do you earn (a month)?)

If you travel on a train or visit a village in the countryside, these questions will definitely come up. How to deal with it? Please refer to earlier discussion under "Things you can talk about".

The above mentioned ways of greeting are normally used among equals and in informal situations. Some of them can be used to greet seniors but if you do, you must address them with appropriate titles before the greeting.

Saying goodbye — response

Any conversation sooner or later must end, and we must say "goodbye". The most common idiom is 再见. It literally means "see (you) again", but, like 你好 this expression appears to be a rather modern creation, likely influenced by the similar constructions in western languages. Very often a Chinese-style "goodbye" is not just a phrase, but a lengthy process, so one must be sensitive to the hints of an approaching end of a meeting. Here are some of those hints:

- 你 还 有 什 么 （ 别 的 ） 事 吗？
(you still have what [other] thing question marker)
Is there anything else (I can do for you)?
- 就 先 这 样 吧。
(just for the moment like this suggestion marker)
(Shall we) leave it like that for now?
- 以 后 再 说 吧。
(after again talk suggestion marker)
(Shall we) talk about (it) later?
- 我 还 有 点 儿 事， 先 走 一 步 啦。
(I still have a bit thing, earlier walk one step polite noise)
I'm afraid I have to go — duty calls.

In China, it is usually guests who should say goodbye first. After saying thank-you (but not among good friends — see "Thanking — response"), guests will work out some valid "excuses" to tell hosts that it is not because they do not enjoy the occasion, but because they have other matters to attend to, which "force" them to leave. Hosts then have to urge guests to stay (even if they can't wait to see

everybody off). So please do not be fooled by this "hospitality". Usually only after three rounds, can they really say goodbye:

客: 我 还 有 点 儿 事, 先 走 一 步 啦。
(I still have a bit thing, earlier walk one step)

Guest: I'm afraid I have to go — duty calls.

主: 不 再 坐 一 会 儿 啦?
(not further sit a moment polite noise)

Host: Can't you stay a bit longer?

客: 不 啦。
(no polite noise)

Guest: I'm afraid I can't.

主: 还 不 到 九 点 呢,
(still not reach 9 o'clock polite noise)
再 坐 一 会 儿 吧?
(further sit a moment suggestion marker)

Host: It's not 9 o'clock yet, please stay.

客: 我 真 有 事, 一 定 得 走 啦。
(I really have thing, must have to walk polite noise)

Guest: I really have to go.

主: 那 我 送 送 你。
(that I see (you) out see (you) out you)

Host: (In that case) I'll see you out.

客: 不 用 啦。
(no need polite noise)

Guest: Please don't.

主: 楼 道 太 黑,
(corridor too dark,)
我 给 你 拿 手 电 照 着。
(I for you take torch illuminate)

Host: The corridor is too dark. Let me take the torch to light up your way.

客: 不 用, 不 用, 我 摸 黑 已 经 习 惯 了。
(no need no need, I feel [[in the] dark] already accustom.
请 留 步。
please leave step)

Guest: No, no, no, I'm used to the dark. Please stop here.

主: 我 还 是 送 送 你。
(I still see [you] out see [you] out you)

Host: I will still see you out.

客: 谢 谢, 谢 谢, 回 去 吧!
(thanks thanks, go back suggestion marker)

Guest: Thanks, please go back (to the house).

(now, at the door or the gate:)

主 慢 走 哇!

(slow walk polite noise — variation of 啊)

Host: Please watch your steps.

or

主: 走 好 哇!

(walk well polite noise — variation of 啊)

Host: Be careful.

客: 诶!

(agreement noise)

Guest: OK.

A Chinese host must see the guests to the gate (or these days to the door). There a polite guest is expected to say 请留步 (Please leave [your] steps). Otherwise the host would perceive he is expected to follow the guests further into darkness. It's worth remembering that in China dinners start earlier, usually about 6:30, and consequently guests tend to leave earlier as well. Staying in somebody else's house after 9 p.m. is normally unwelcome, although these days young people's 派队 (parties) have different rules.

Under the increasing influence of English (mostly, but not exclusively, American) speech etiquette, some new expressions are making inroads into Chinese conversations. One must mention such expressions as 周末愉快 (weekend pleasant — have a good weekend) or 晚安 (night peace — good night). Nevertheless, these are obvious translations of the western idioms and still rather alien for the majority of the Chinese.

Requests — acceptance/refusals

Chinese ways of asking for something tend to start from a rather lengthy explanation of the reasons and only then get to the point. If a request is perceived as particularly important or troublesome, such explanations can take a lot of time. The following is a typical example of how a Chinese employee usually goes about getting permission to have two hours' leave. Imagine how a western manager would cope with such wording:

A Chinese employee (man or woman), knocks on the door and enters:
 "Manager xxx, you know, my parents were sent down to the countryside during the Cultural Revolution, but fortunately my father has a sister, a wonderful woman who managed to look after me well during those years but it was so difficult for her. She has a daughter she loves very much, and the girl is like a sister to me. Now the girl is getting married, but I have not found a suitable wedding present for her. I just heard that there is a wonderful necklace in the Carrefour (a chain department store), but the store can only put the necklace on hold for two hours. Can I have two hours' leave and I promise to come back as soon as I can..."

A typical Chinese expression to make requests is:

麻烦 您 帮 我..., 好吗?

(trouble you help me ok)

Could you (do) ... for me, please?

But quite often it is mistakenly translated as "Could you help me do something please?" Although in the above Chinese expression it does have a verb "help" there, you shouldn't imagine that the associate is going with you and you are merely going along as an assistant — you are being asked to do something single-handed. It is not uncommon that when you are busy packing for a business trip, a colleague or a rather distant friend should come to you and ask you to buy for them anything not available locally — five pairs of air pillow insoles, for example. These types of requests should generally be agreed to as it is part of the game "you scratch my back and I'll scratch yours". With the success of the Chinese market economy, requests like these have become less and less necessary domestically, but for an overseas business trip, you, as the beneficiary of this "favouritism", are expected to ask around to see if you can "help" get anything for your colleagues. By doing this your colleagues will pay for their own gifts, because you are expected to bring back souvenirs for everybody in your office anyway.

The Chinese normally do not want to deliver unpleasant news, or say anything unpleasant, so they often prefer to give false information if they believe their listeners will be happy to hear it. Normally, it is not a deliberate scheme to mislead the listener, but rather another manifestation of an ingrained tendency to avoid unpleasant and conflict-generating situations. A common side effect is an astonishing unwillingness of the Chinese to refuse their associates' suggestion or request outright. If a person must reject somebody else's request, it is normally done in the most indirect and oblique way, so instead of saying "No, this is impossible", one says something like "Under the current situation, the execution of this valuable proposal has to be postponed..." Occasionally, these polite refusals can be very complicated, so an inexperienced foreigner can often fail to realise that a particular lengthy answer really means "No. No way". The normal way to say "no" is to start with praise of the suggestion to be rejected, and then, after a lot of positive comments, conclude the remark with "but" (... but it needs further consideration) or empty promises (... we might be able to afford it in the near future) etc. The listener gets the subtle hint, and nobody is embarrassed.

Invitations/offers — acceptance/refusals

There is one thing all students of Chinese must remember very well about invitations: the first invitation must be rejected (and second, most likely, too). An old Chinese saying insists 事不过三 (nothing is over three [times]) — only if an invitation is rejected three times, one can be sure that the invitation/rejection is genuine. The inadequate understanding of this peculiarity often results in embarrassment or other complications. For example, when suggesting a Chinese friend join you for a meal,

you must be prepared to exercise your cajoling skills and often with an indication that you *really* want them to come. If you stop asking after the first refusal, it is likely to be interpreted that you are just bluffing.

There are many situations in which it is possible to practice this kind of "insisting", a behaviour which English speaking westerners may be able to do with friends and family, but not so easily with strangers, because we can't predict how they will react. However, because the recipient in Chinese culture is usually supposed to act in a way that seems reluctant to westerners, the initiator needs to have some insisting strategies. Whether the topic is going out, inviting somebody to go somewhere, offering to help, giving advice or disagreeing, being able to insist that a reluctant (or pretending to be reluctant) partner does something will stand students in good stead when they are in a Chinese speaking environment. Comparisons with what would happen in your culture are always useful, but of course our aim is to explain a Chinese way of thinking and acting. To illustrate the point made above, look at the following — both dialogues are between acquaintances.

Australian version

- A: Would you like a Coke? (standing at the fridge)
 B: Thanks.
 B: Yes please, I'm really thirsty!
 B: Mmm, no thanks.
 B: No, I've just had a drink, thanks anyway.
 B: No, I'm not that keen on soft drinks, but I'll have some water.
 B: No, but I wouldn't mind a coffee.

Chinese version

- 甲: 喝 点儿 可乐! (puts it down on the table in front of you)
 (drink a bit Coke)
 A: Have a Coke!
 乙: 我 不 渴, 你 不用 客气!
 (I not thirsty you no need polite)
 B: I'm not thirsty, you don't need to be polite!
 甲: 喝 点儿 吧!
 (drink a bit suggestion marker)
 A: Have it, please!
 乙: 我 真 不 渴。
 (I really not thirsty)
 B: I'm really not thirsty!
 甲: 看 你 怎么 那么 客气? !
 (look you how come that polite)
 A: How come YOU are so polite? !
 乙: 那 好 吧, 谢谢了!
 (that OK thanks)
 B: OK, thank you.

The Chinese version can seem rude or at least rather presumptuous to Australians who expect to be consulted on what they want, and for the person they are speaking to to listen to them, but in Chinese culture,

- a) the host would be expected to guess/know/understand what the guest wants and act on it;
- b) anything less than forceful hospitality by the host might be interpreted as a less than cordial welcome, or at worst a brush-off;
- c) the guest's polite refusal is understood as mere politeness, but an instant willingness to accept a proposal would seem greedy.

“请客吃饭”是中华文化亮丽的一道风景线 (“inviting people to eat” is an important component in Chinese culture). Especially in the business world, few contracts could be smoothly signed without a series of banquets. The above mentioned “insisting” principle is also applied at dining tables. Your Chinese hosts feel responsible to make sure that you 吃好喝好 (eat well and drink well) by plying food on your plate and filling up your glasses all the time. Here, where no verbal reactions could deliver the message that you are full, the only strategy is to leave some food or drink unfinished — contrary to the etiquette you were brought up with.

In western culture, it is almost taboo to share food from the same cutlery, so being the recipient of a tender morsel placed in your bowl by a solicitous stranger using his/her own chopsticks can be unnerving! But to most Chinese, this is the whole point — being able to share food from the same bowl is the very first step to “become one of us” — 成了自己人就什么都好说了 (once becoming one of us, we can talk about anything). This of course can be used as a mind game, but here we are only trying to “dig up” the cultural roots. Don't panic — in most of the developed urban areas, people have learned to accommodate the “civilised” practice and to provide public chopsticks on dining tables.

“A favourite Chinese sport is fighting over the bill in restaurants. You'll see people trying to pull the bill away from someone else at their table and shouting red-faced at one another.”¹⁰ The general rule is rather simple: whoever initiates the invitation pays the bill. However, “it's considered polite to offer to pay once or even twice, even if you're clearly the guest. Protests may be made loudly to show sincerity, even when it's a bluff.” You can jokingly say:

你 请客, 我 付 钱。
(you invite I pay money)
You invited, but I pay.

To keep the conscience clear once invited, you, as a decent and honest person should remember to, at one stage, repay this favour by 回请 (returning the invitation). The rule here is 有来无往非礼也 (it's not polite to receive without giving something back). As a host, “if you'd like to pay without having an all-out fight at the table, pay the bill the day before or sneak off to the “toilet” and pay without your guests knowing. Although your companions might show displeasure at your sneak attack, it will often be welcomed.”

Complimenting — response

A very generous measure of flattery is involved in Chinese interactions. One can and often *must* make comments about their partners' infinite wisdom, experience and other admirable qualities. Since a polite person must elevate his conversation partner, such flattery is taken much less seriously than it would be in Australia or America. Students see the "untruthfulness" in those compliments when they are so frequently complimented on how beautifully they speak Chinese, especially if they can only mutter a few words! Other compliments should similarly be interpreted as a gesture of cordiality, not as the truth. So, rather than saying 谢谢 (thanks), the automatic "compliment negation" response is a must, especially among acquaintances. In other words, the best way to react to any flattery (even if you believe that this is a fair and well deserved remark) is simply by saying: 哪里, 哪里 (where, where — rubbish) or 没有, 没有 (having not, having not — no way) accompanied by a head shake, a downward look and a slight smile!

To practise receiving and giving compliments, a fun game which students seem to enjoy is the following:

Everyone in the class thinks of 5 or 6 compliments and writes them down, then (all in the middle of the room) they walk up to 5 or 6 different people who fit those attributes and compliment them, one after the other. (It will be noisy, so no one need hear anyone else's comments.) Regardless of how true the compliment is, their partners must deny it immediately:

- 甲: 你的 中文 讲得 真 好!
(your Chinese speak really well)
A: You speak beautiful Chinese!
乙: 哪里, 哪里!
(where where)
B: Rubbish!
- 甲: 你的 歌 唱得 真 好听!
(your song sing really good to hear)
A: You sing beautifully!
乙: 哪儿 的话!
(where of word)
B: Rubbish!
- 甲: 你的 画儿 画得 真 好!
(your painting paint really well)
A: You paint beautifully!
乙: 不 好, 不 好!
(not well not well)
B: Not at all!
- 甲: 你 真 聪明!
(you really clever)

A: You are really clever!

乙: 没 有, 没 有!
(not have not have)

B: Not at all!

• 甲: 你 真 酷!
(you really cool)

A: You are cool!

乙: 骂 我 吧? !
(scold me suggestion marker)

B: You are pulling my leg!

While in China, one has to be careful with compliments as understood in the west. In the west flattery directed at women is seen as rather innocent, although it is increasingly suspicious in these politically correct times. In China, persistent complimenting can be seen as bordering on sexual harassment, so one has to be sparing with compliments to women, especially in regard to their physical appearance.

One has to be careful with excessively positive remarks about somebody's personal belongings as well. If you keep saying things about the beauty of some picture scroll you see at a Chinese house, the chances are that the hosts, out of politeness, will try to present it to you (being very unhappy about such a turn in the depth of their hearts).

The gift exchange has been an essential part of Chinese life since time immemorial. It is considered improper to visit somebody's house without an appropriate gift, and of course, you are expected to give something when you meet an old friend or acquaintance after a long period of absence. If you are introduced to somebody for anything more than a short formal talk, you are to give something as well. You normally bring some souvenirs for your co-workers after an overseas trip or, for that matter, after any extended business trip.

The gifts are always wrapped and not supposed to be opened in front of people. Usually a receiver would put the wrapped gift aside and "examine" it later. However, one can never be sure that their gift would not be recycled and sent further through the gift-exchange chain. There is a story about a cream cake which after a few weeks of travel came back to the person who once purchased it. It may be a joke, but quite a plausible one.

Thanking — response

Compared to English speaking westerners, the Chinese do not say 谢谢 (thanks — thank you) too often. For example, it is not customary to thank somebody for an action which is actually a part of their job. So, the Chinese seldom thank shop assistants, taxi drivers or library staff. They also seldom say thanks in the family or among close friends. "Thank you" is reserved for strangers who do some more or less unexpected favour. However, within the framework of 关系 (guanxi) system

(to be discussed in "Level of ritualisation") verbal thanks are not really appreciated. Favours must be repaid in kind, by other favours, not by words.

Apologising — response

Chinese are also very shy about expressing their apologies verbally. Although Chinese do have the equivalent:

甲: 对不起!

A: (I'm) sorry!

乙: 不 客气!

B: Don't mention it!

A more common way to show such feelings is an embarrassed smile or to stick their tongues out as we have explained in.

Complaining — response

Modern western tradition (Australian or American alike) puts a very special emphasis on somebody's "positive attitude" to the world. The best — or, at least, most visible — expression of such an attitude is a smile. One must project an image of the successful "winner" under all circumstances. Persistent complaining about problems is often seen as strange and even uncivilised behaviour — especially when the problems in question are essentially personal. The Chinese approach is completely different. Chinese are not too afraid to look like a "pathetic loser". Complaints are expected and, indeed, somewhat encouraged. Even when talking to not so close acquaintances, a Chinese can occasionally spell out all the detailed accounts of their assorted difficulties. Chinese believe that complaining is basically good: it's better to get those "evil spirits" out of your system rather than to let them brew inside you. The Chinese equivalent to a "whinging pom" is 祥林嫂 — a pathetic woman who went around complaining about her misfortunes to everybody passing by.

Giving advice — response

The Chinese generally enjoy giving advice, so for westerners they look prone to "over mothering", which some people can find patronising and, hence, annoying. In western (more precisely, English speaking) societies much of such advice would be considered an intrusion into personal sphere. However, there is no need to take any kind of offence. This is the Chinese way of showing interest, warmth and intimacy.

Chinese friends can give you advice on how to dress, how to educate children, how to keep yourself warm in winter, what to eat. Occasionally among close friends, such advice can be very persistent. In other words, telling people what to do is not seen as something improper — quite contrary — it is regarded as 关心人 (caring about others). Someone walking with a friend who is cold will do everything in their power to demonstrate their care and concern, like giving them their own jacket — it will probably result in both people sharing the jacket and both getting flu, but that's not the point! A friend who is ill needs to be accompanied to the hospital,

even if they insist they can go alone. If you visit somebody at the hospital, detailed inquiries should be made about the patient's health problems, advice is usually offered with lengthy explanations and offers of assistance are expected. The English speaking westerners' efforts to be independent and to respect other people's choice are interpreted by most Chinese as being cold and uncaring.

Joking — response

It is widely acknowledged that different cultures have strikingly different ideas about what is and what is not funny. Jokes which lead to thunderous laughter in one country will sound strange or silly in another. It is difficult, indeed impossible, to describe the differences, but everybody who has lived in a country of a different culture for any length of time is aware of this phenomenon.

Here we cannot dwell at any length on the psychology of Chinese humour, although it is advisable for students to know a few popular jokes, however old. They might not find them particularly funny, but it does not matter as long as they get some idea of what Chinese humour sounds like.

Unfortunately, humour is difficult to translate. This is especially true for Chinese humour, more so since the Chinese have widely employed word games of different kinds in their joking. However, the nature of the Chinese language, with an unusually large number of characters with different meanings but similar pronunciation, has created great opportunities for such jokes. Here we give just one of virtually countless examples of this kind.

Every Chinese knows Darwin's (actually, Spenser's) catchphrase "survival of the fittest" — 适者生存 pronounced as "shì zhě shēng cún". An employee asks his boss for advice on how to get a promotion. The boss's answer is — 是者生存, pronounced exactly the same as the catchphrase above — "shì zhě shēng cún" but means "survival of those who say 'Yes, sir'".

Swearing

Swearing exists in any culture, and, one must admit, it *does* attract the interest of students. Teachers have to be careful though, especially since many Chinese swear words are really rude* and even obscene*. However, a few reasonably innocent expressions will not cause any harm:

住嘴！	— stop mouth	— Shut up!
废话！	— garbage talk	— Rubbish!
放屁/屁话！	— release fart	— Bullshit!
马屁精！	— horse fart devil	— Lackey/crawler
混帐！	— muddled debt	— How dare you!
		(only senior to junior)
混 / 浑蛋！	— muddled egg	— Bastard!
王 / 忘八蛋！	— turtle egg	— Arsehole!
笨蛋！	— silly egg	— Stupid!

傻逼！*	— stupid cunt	— Silly (old) bugger!
牛逼！*	— ox balls	— Arrogant bastard!
泼妇！	— shrew woman	— Bitch!
狗杂种！	— dog bastard	— Son of bitch!
去你的！	— go yours	— Piss/ Fuck off!
见鬼去吧！	— see the devil	— Go to hell!
见鬼了！	— have seen the devil	— Oh, bother!
他妈的！	— his mother's ...	— Damn/Bugger! Bastard!
操！*	— fuck	— Fuck!
操你妈！*	— fuck your mother	— Fuck you!

Superstitions and language

Like most languages, Chinese has its own taboos of a superstitious nature (there are other taboos as well, but we have neither time nor space to dwell on this question). The first thing to remember is the avoidance of the numeral "four" in the Cantonese speaking world where they have a different tone system from northern China. This numeral in Cantonese sounds like another word — "death" and therefore it is not nice to have a "4th floor" in a hospital if its name can be interpreted as "floor of death". The same superstition is well known in Japan and Korea, where Chinese numerals are widely used. At the same time, for the speakers of Northern dialects, number "four" (pronounced "sì") and "death" (pronounced "sǐ") are clearly tone tagged — easily distinguished by their tones and, hence, the numeral "four" is not such a taboo in northern China.

There are lucky numbers as well. Sixty-six and eight hundred and eighty-eight are the most commonly used ones:

六六大顺	six, six — big smooth
八八八 — 发发发	eight, eight, eight — get rich, get rich, get rich

In more affluent parts of Greater China (e.g. Hong Kong), local businessmen pay exorbitant prices for "lucky" registration plates or mobile phone numbers.

Level of ritualisation

The traditional perception of China in the west has long placed special emphasis on the "Chinese ceremonies". The Chinese were seen as people prone to excessively ritualised behaviour. Although the stereotype is condemned in these politically correct days, it is far from being groundless. Traditional Chinese culture indeed took ceremonies very seriously. In the Confucian world view, the major difference between 君子 (gentlemen) and 小人 (lesser beings) was the gentleman's ability to follow prescribed rituals including rituals of conversation. The ability to use elaborate forms of address, to show respect (or lack thereof) in the most subtle way, to be very polite

and slightly flattering has traditionally been an important part of upper class Chinese culture. The great social upheavals of the last 150 years brought considerable changes to ways of interaction and have somewhat "de-ritualised" Chinese culture. The rise of new social forces, the usual capitalist emphasis on efficiency and success (combined with communist glorification of inborn virtues of the simple and uneducated) greatly contributed to this process. Despite all this, China is still a country where the level of ritualisation is quite high by western standards.

However, alongside this formal and heavily ritualised behaviour, there are other types of interpersonal relationships in China. For example, 君子之交 (relationship between gentlemen), describes the gentlemanly relationship between males who consider themselves to be intellectually superior and a cut above the rest (君子 used to be a term for Confucian gentleman, *literati*); whereas 哥们儿义气 (mateship) refers to a lower down the social scale, boisterous, friendly relationship. 哥们儿 can be translated as "brother", but it has acquired some connotations with the world of outlaws or, at least, people living on the fringe of "officially recognised" society. This form of address in the old days was widely used by vagabonds, sailors, mercenaries and the like — tough people surviving in a tough environment. Perhaps the most appropriate translation in English would be "mate". If you were mates — 哥们儿, you would value 哥们儿间不分你我 (among mates, there is no difference between you and me) — proximity, camaraderie but still hierarchy, toughness and (verbally and superficially) a measure of conflict; whereas among gentlemen 君子 they would value 君子之交淡如水 (the relationship between gentlemen is as plain as water) — distance, hierarchy and consensus. Most Chinese would prefer the warm feeling associated with 哥们儿.

The simplicity and straightforwardness associated with 哥们儿义气 has been a virtue of humble people when dealing with one another. However, it does not mean that this style was free from hierarchy. After all, as discussed earlier, there is no word for "brother" in Chinese. "Brother" can only be elder or younger (and in the case of 哥们儿, it is an elder brother). Equality is somewhat superficial, so even amongst 哥们儿, there is a great deal of hierarchy expressed in both verbal and non-verbal ways.

The greater the social distance between conversation partners, the more elaborate these rituals are. A typical example that every student of Chinese has to encounter sooner or later is an interaction between a teacher and a student. The Chinese culture takes relations between teachers and students very seriously. An old saying insists that 一日为师, 终生为父 (one day being one's teacher, a whole life being one's father). Hence, the teacher must be treated as an embodiment of both wisdom and social superiority. For Chinese, the behaviour of western students often looks outrageous because they do not demonstrate sufficient respect for their teachers. The exchanges between students and teachers in China are heavily ritualised, and students go to great lengths to show their socially inferior positions (no stigma is attached to such behaviour).

An important aspect of Chinese culture and life is the famous (or notorious)

guanxi system. The system itself is not peculiar to China, since most cultures have something resembling it. However in China this system has developed somewhat out of proportion. 关系 (*guanxi*) literally means "connections", and this all-penetrating, ever-present network defines the personal lives of most Chinese. Foreigners cannot hope to stay aloof, since without 关系 a lot of things can never be done or, at least, can be tremendously time-consuming to accomplish. The basic principle underlying the entire system is the exchange of favours, based on rather strict reciprocity. Once A does B a favour, B is indebted to A and cannot refuse A's request some time later. There is some resemblance of mentally kept "accounts", taking into consideration the amount and importance of favours given and received, and every Chinese, especially a career minded one, tries to stay in the black. Foreigners must understand this system, even if they're not going to play the game themselves. Once somebody does an important favour for them, they are often expected to be repaid in future with a reciprocal favour. If somebody receives favours but does not return them, this is seen as very bad and dishonest behaviour, and the culprit is treated accordingly by the society at large, not only by those particular persons who were not "repaid" their "credit". The 关系 (*guanxi*) system reflects another important part of the Chinese frame of mind: the special role of interpersonal relations. In a modern western society individuals tend to interact according to their current social functions. A new receptionist at some company will not make much difference to a new client. In China the relations between people are seen as, above all, interactions between persons, not between functionaries, hence good personal connections even with people in relatively minor positions are very important. The shortage of many goods and services aggravates the situation. Needless to say, corruption is often a byproduct of the 关系 (*guanxi*) system (indeed, the entire system often looks like a web of corruption to a western observer). However 关系 is a fact of life in modern China. It is so wide and out of control that a term has been specially created — 关系学, literally the study of *guanxi*, "connectionology". Therefore, like it or not, our students have to have some basic understanding of this system.

Here I have "borrowed" two case studies from Jean Brick¹¹:

Case 1

After having worked in the Australian Embassy in Beijing for some time, John returned to Australia to live. However, although he had many Chinese friends in Australia, he still missed the friends he had made in Beijing. He was therefore delighted when one of his friends wrote to him to tell him that he was coming to study in Australia. John of course told his Chinese friends in Australia about this.

Unfortunately, John's friend failed to get a visa and so was unable to come. Shortly afterwards, John noticed that some of his Chinese friends' attitudes to him had changed. He also heard that some people considered him selfish, cold and even dishonest. John was both puzzled and upset. Why this sudden change? He really couldn't understand it.

What do you think might explain the change in some people's attitudes towards John?

Case 2

Robert was the manager of a large computing company and was advertising for a computer programmer. One night at home he received a telephone call from a friend, Liu Dongping, who came from Shanghai. Liu Dongping said that he was interested in the job. Robert told him to send a copy of his curriculum vitae. Liu sent the copy and two days later rang up to check that it had arrived. Robert said that it had, but he didn't sound very pleased — Liu didn't understand why, but thought it might be because Robert was busy.

A few days later Liu was asked to an interview with Robert and after the interview he was quite confident. When he found out that he had not in fact got the job, he was shocked, angry and hurt. He felt that Robert had betrayed him and decided to break off his friendship.

Why didn't Liu Dongping get the job?

Was he correct in deciding to break off his friendship with Robert?

What would you advise Liu Dongping to do in future?

Emotionology

As mentioned earlier, typically a socially senior Chinese is not supposed to express any kind of emotion in public. Self-control and reserve have been major virtues of the Chinese traditional upper class, and this approach has been inherited by the modern elite. The "high style" or 君子 of interaction implies that the partners must "behave themselves", keep dignified postures and retain self-control during the interaction. However "commoners" — people without much social or political ambition — are quite prone to the display of unrestrained emotions. This is the reason why, to an English speaker, the Chinese seem to speak rather loudly and gesticulate a lot, although the more educated and socially senior a person is, the less likely they'll behave in such a way (essentially, such behaviour is associated with 哥们儿义气). The atmosphere of many public places, like restaurants, pubs or bars, is described in Chinese as 热闹 (warm and noisy). Such a description does not imply any negative connotations. Actually, if one describes some restaurant or shop as 热闹, this is a form of praise. Like a perfect British or Australian pub or bar on a Friday night, a good Chinese restaurant *must* be 热闹, the right atmosphere where a person can feel completely relaxed. For a westerner, especially if he is not a Chinese speaker, such raucous behaviour might give a completely wrong impression of endless bickering, while the content of these loud exchanges is perfectly polite. Hence there are often comments made by English speakers who have just come back from their first trip to China that "Chinese people always seem to be quarrelling with each other".

There is an opinion that open aggression is generally discouraged in Chinese culture. This is a generalisation, and, like all generalisations, is not completely

true, but in interpersonal interactions Chinese actually do tend to avoid aggressive behaviour. Public anger is seen as a proverbial "loss of face" in the presence of strangers, and if you start yelling you are likely to get nowhere. A typical reaction to more extreme kinds of verbal or non-verbal offence is crying rather than shouting back. People are educated to show their sense of grief and humiliation after being subjected to such an offence. Perhaps it even makes practical sense: once an offender encounters such a reaction, they are more likely to feel compassion to the offended, while in the case of aggressive counter-attack, they may simply behave defensively. Occasionally this trick is employed by foreigners as well (women in particular) as a reaction to rude and offensive behaviour of some official. Getting angry in public is bad in most cultures, but in China this is especially true.

Afterword

It is true that the world's cultures, like the world's peoples, have a lot in common. Our notes deal with the differences between the Chinese and English speaking western, especially Australian cultures, but, needless to say, there are many common things. It is the existence and, indeed, predominance of these common features which make the interaction of people from different cultural backgrounds possible. People from different cultures are actually much more alike than they realise.

In teaching a foreign language and culture the teacher must find a way between two dangers. Neither overemphasising the differences nor underestimating them are conducive to effective education. This is especially true when we teach absolute beginners. We all know that when somebody approaches things "foreign", they are prone to mental blockage and fail to manipulate their existing knowledge in order to tackle unfamiliar "monsters". If we, as teachers, at this vulnerable stage for our students, mistakenly overemphasise the differences between cultures, we can run into the risk of adding more mental burden to them. They need, at this stage, something they are more familiar with so they can feel reassured, rather than feel even more alien and daunted. Furthermore, overemphasizing differences can easily create a wrong image of an exotic and strange place, populated by aliens whose actions are basically beyond comprehension. This image can lead to biased interpretation of a foreign culture. Such a culture can be seen as bizarre, abnormal and potentially menacing. Perhaps the image of the "inscrutable Oriental" has much to do with the representation of China (or, for that matter, other Asian countries) as a completely alien and exotic land.

On the other hand, underestimating the differences and excessive emphasis on common features can be dangerous too. It misleads students to perceive their own ways as the only "normal" cultural standard and to impose their own codes on people with whom they are interacting. Without a high level of cultural awareness everything which is different can be seen as weird and abnormal, and the only way

to create such an awareness is to inform students about the differences as well as historical and cultural traditions which resulted in these differences. Needless to say, the knowledge of cultural specifics can also be very beneficial for those students who may eventually work in the country of their studies. For them, such knowledge is likely to be as important as proficiency in the language of their studies (indeed, it is often even more important).

As in every country, groupings of individuals make up what we commonly call "society". In regard to Chinese society, we need to remember that while some generalisations are applicable and useful, on a more individual level, there are always many exceptions. As individuals, people can be notoriously difficult to pigeonhole and predict, which we all know from our own friendships and relationships. My observations on Chinese thoughts and social behaviour can therefore only be a rough generalisation of society in its wider form. Once you make close friends with a few individuals, the "rules" don't seem to apply in quite the same way!

Since time immemorial all writers in China were expected to demonstrate their (real or not so real) modesty and lack of pretension. Following this centuries-old convention, I'll finish the article with an old proverb 抛砖引玉 — which literally means "throw a brick to induce jade". Here I am just tossing around a few ideas in the hope that it will attract more significant discussion on the above mentioned issues.

Endnotes

- 1 I would like to thank Ye Zhengdao and Dian Elvin for their interests and suggestions and Stan Jones for reading the manuscript and giving me helpful comments. I also would like to express my gratitude to Shirley Johns and Chris Kain, who made a lot of valuable suggestions. My very special thanks are reserved for Dr Andrei Lankov who spent a lot of time reading and re-reading the manuscript and who constantly encouraged me in my undertaking.
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5 **How can we make Australian English meaningful to ESL¹ learners?**

Anne-Marie Barraja-Rohan

Introduction

"I don't like when Australians say: 'Hello, how are you?' It does not mean anything" was reported to me by one of my Hong Kong students, Lee, who happened to be married to an Australian. Her level of English was advanced, yet this sociocultural norm was annoying her. She felt that this Australian greeting was devoid of meaning and hypocritical since the "How are you?" was a pseudo health inquiry. I experienced the same feeling of annoyance when another Hong Kong student said to me one day as I was going to the cafeteria: "Where are you going?" as a way of greeting me. Being annoyed, perplexed and, at worst, offended is not an uncommon experience for anyone who has been in contact with people from diverse cultures. In the worst case, these feelings can escalate to outrage when the native speaker feels insulted and responds physically. This unfortunate situation occurred to two adult female learners of English in two unrelated incidents. These students were from South East Asia, had an intermediate English level and both appeared very polite and were quietly spoken. However, while engaged in a seemingly inoffensive gentle conversation with a female native speaker they had met for the first time, they were both slapped in the face. In recounting their stories to me they had no idea why it happened; one fact we could establish is that they certainly did not swear. So why can inoffensive language produce such intense feelings and reaction? This question tormented me and I decided to research it.

In this chapter, I propose to examine aspects of language that, when violated, can produce the feelings described above. This is when language and culture interact, and it is crucial that we, ESL teachers, are aware of these aspects of language so we can help our students make sense of how we relate to each other verbally and non-verbally. In this chapter, I will look at both verbal and non-verbal aspects of spoken interaction and, more precisely, at verbosity (the use of simultaneous talk

and silence), interpersonal relationships (the use of prosody, non-verbal language and speech acts that have sociocultural norms) as well as politeness.

Note that to illustrate the above points, I shall use excerpts of authentic spoken interactions drawn from my own corpus, as well as from other sources. I shall also use my own experience as an ESL teacher, as a migrant, as a French native speaker as well as a researcher.

Verbosity

The level of verbosity depends among other things on two factors that I am going to examine briefly below: overlaps and silence.

Overlaps

Overlap is talking simultaneously and the amount of overlapping may be a cultural factor. In fact, overlapping is linked with timing in turn-taking and the interactants' intent. For instance, in Australian conversations minimal responses such as *yeah*, *right*, *mmhm*, etc. often overlap the speaker's utterances, but these overlaps are minimal and not interruptive. However, overlapping can be done intentionally to interrupt the prior speaker's utterance in the case of disagreement or to retain the floor when more than one conversationalists compete for the floor.

For instance, the excerpt below, which is taken from a political debate between the former Prime Minister Paul Keating (PK) and the present Prime Minister John Howard (JH), shows an interruption by PK, his attempts at taking the floor through his repetitions of "at the last election" and finally his success at speaking in the clear and taking a full turn:

Overlapping and Interruption

1 JH: *Nobody belie²ves your word,*

2 PK: *[at the last election, Jo[hn,*

3 JH: *[when't [comes to th' p-*

4 PK: *[at the last election*

5 JH: *privatisa- you haven't got- any [credibility at all.]*

6 PK: *[at th- at the last] election; I*

wrote to the Telecom Telstra employees and told th'm that we ...

(Gardner 1999)

It is obvious that overlaps can be used for particular conversational strategies as the previous example illustrates, however overlapping can also be a cultural trait. The same Hong Kong student, Lee, commented that she often interrupts her Anglo-Australian mother-in-law who dislikes it. Overlapping can be a cultural phenomenon and in some cultures like the Athabaskans in Alaska and Canada (see Enninger 1987), it does not happen because speakers pause for quite some time before taking a turn, so overlapping in this culture would be unacceptable.

This aspect of talk and culture can also be discussed with your students (not recommended for primary school students). In the discussion it is important to differentiate between what the etiquette says and what most people actually do. Indeed, in the French etiquette for instance, it is considered impolite to interrupt anyone, but in practice it is often done as it is part of the French ethos. The reason for the discrepancy between the etiquette and the usage resides in the fact that talking is acquired through "doing", and not learnt by being told or reading books, like the etiquette.

What usually motivates the French to overlap is a solidarity feeling (see Béal 1990). In other words, the idea that when one is on the same wavelength as the co-conversationalist, one needs to display that solidarity by participating in the conversation along with the current speaker. Deborah Tannen, a linguist, calls this style of talking "high involvement" (1994), which can also be an individual peculiarity³. She states (1994:53) that this type of overlap is a "cooperative overlap" in that "a listener [talks] along with a speaker not in order to interrupt but to show enthusiastic listenership and participation." There may be clashes between interactants using different speaking styles since when one overlaps the other usually stops immediately, as in the case of Lee and her mother-in-law, thus leading to negative feelings. However being aware of the differences will enhance communication through either accommodating to the other interactant's style or accepting the differences.

Suggested classroom activity

- 1 Group students in 3 to have a conversation on any topic they choose (if need be give them a topic).
- 2 Pull one student out of each group.
- 3 Instruct the students that have been pulled out to overlap the conversation every second or third turn. Make sure the remaining students do not hear these instructions.
- 4 Get the students to have a conversation for about 8-10 minutes.
- 5 Get students to end the conversation then ask each group what effect the overlapping talk had on 1) their conversation, and 2) on the speakers themselves (exploring their feelings).
- 6 Ask the students if they talk simultaneously in their first language and the reasons why they do or do not.
- 7 Discuss with the students what people tend to do in Australia and show them examples of authentic talk.
- 8 Explore the reasons explained above why people may consciously overlap.
- 9 Get students to tape some short conversations (or excerpts) in English (from television/radio, or live) and bring the recordings to class to observe together overlapping in Australian conversations, and discuss when and why overlaps occur.

Silence:

Silence is not usually well tolerated in Anglo-Australian culture although in conversation there are often mini silences within or between turns. These mini silences occur frequently and are due to various reasons, which may include the following:

- 1 the speaker needs time to (re)formulate his/her sentence;
- 2 the speaker is pausing to think about his/her response;
- 3 the speaker disagrees or does not give the preferred response, such as refusing to grant a request/rejecting an invitation/declining an offer etc.

An extended period of silence (longer than 3 seconds) is not generally well accepted and people will usually endeavour to fill it with talk.

For instance, consider the use of silence in the following excerpt:

Request 1

- 1 C: *Do me a favour I'm in a hurry. You do electrical engineering, don't you?*
- 2 D: *Yeah. That's right electrical engineering*
- 3 C: *Can you cover for me tonight?*
- 4 *(silence of 1.5 seconds)*
- 5 D: *Sorry mate. I'm- I'm teaching tonight five-thirty till eight.*
- 6 *(brief pause of 0.1 second)*
- 7 D: *Ye[ah*
- 8 C: *[Do you mind they-*
- 9 D: *Yeah yeah! Look I'm on I'm on, sorry. Can't do it...*

(Barraja-Rohan & Pritchard 1997:123)

This excerpt, which should sound familiar to you being teacher-talk, takes place between two male colleagues in a teaching setting. The silence at line 4 and 6 occurs because D does not want to/cannot give C the preferred answer, i.e. granting C's request to cover for him. Unfortunately, D cannot take C's class as D is also teaching that night. The silence is occasioned by the inability to give the preferred response because, in conversation, there is a general tendency to agree with the co-conversationalist (Sacks 1987). The silence in this excerpt is loaded with meaning and in fact prefigures a negative answer, which is typical of such responses. Indeed, contrast it with the next excerpt that also deals with a request and takes place in a similar situation between a male (R) and female colleague (M).

Request 2

- 1 M: *I want to ask you a favour*
- 2 R: *mmhm*
- 3 M: *em you were telling me before that you're gonna be working next week*
- 4 R: *yeah*
- 5 M: *and I was wondering if you could do a little bit of duty in the self-*
- 6 *access centre, keeping an eye on things*
- 7 R: *not a problem*

8 M: *and maybe finishing some of the kits that we've been developing*

9 *[for Bendigo Road]*

10 R: *[not a problem]*

11 M: *Would that be okay?*

12 R: *no-not a problem at all, yeah.*

In this excerpt, it is clear that the recipient R is willing or can perform what is required of him and gives his response immediately after the request has been made at line 7. In fact, at line 10 he even overlaps M in reiterating his acceptance of the request. This is a typical preferred response, which is given immediately or even overlaps the request, so silence in this case has no place whatsoever. Silence always has a meaning in the Anglo-Australian culture and cannot be dismissed, but needs to be read in relation to the context in which it occurs.

Suggested classroom activity

With your students you can explore the meaning of silence in conversation. For instance, ask the following questions and contrast the responses with what is usually done in Australian English (not recommended for primary students):

- 1 Is silence generally accepted in your first language? Why/why not?
- 2 When/in what situations is silence acceptable or expected? a) In English b) in your first language?
- 3 How do you feel when there is silence in an English conversation? Relate any story involving the use of silence and how you dealt with it.

Approaches to interpersonal relationships

Proxemics

Rules for proxemics or physical distance between individuals vary according to different cultures. In Australia, conversationalists in face-to-face interactions stand at some distance from each other. This distance may be because Australians on the whole like having "their own space" so when Australians talk to each other there may be well over 1 metre separating them and sometimes much more (see Pease 1981 for more details and information on body language). However in some cultures, physical distance may be much smaller compared to the Australian one, such as Mediterranean cultures like Greek, French, Italian, Arabic, etc. If an Anglo-Australian talks to someone from any of these cultures, they may feel uncomfortable by the lack of space separating them from the interlocutor, and the dissimilar proxemics may lead to some communication problems. Indeed the Anglo-Australian may feel their co-conversationalist is overstepping their so-called private space and may feel threatened, which in turn may be reflected in the language used. This is something that can be discussed with students in order to make them aware that non-verbal

behaviour also plays a role in interaction, and that culture is also reflected in a physical way.

Greeting

Why would the Australian greeting annoy the Hong Kong student mentioned earlier? It is worth discussing with students speech acts such as this one, as they often carry a cultural undertone. What is obvious to native speakers is not necessarily so for the non-native speaker. Misunderstandings and communication breakdowns can happen for other reasons than grammatical or phonological ones, and can reflect differing sociocultural norms of interaction. In Australian English, the sociocultural norm in the act of greeting is generally done with "Hello/hi, how are you?" (For a more in-depth understanding of sociocultural norms, refer to Crozet 1996.) The health inquiry is not genuine and this is what annoyed the Hong Kong student.

In most situations, where the sentence stress is on *you*, the inquirer does not really want to know about your health. The typical response will be: "Good, thanks" and the conversation can then go into the next phase or terminate there. However, when the sentence stress falls on *are*, it is very likely that the inquirer will want to have information about your health, which then becomes a topic. The second case may happen between two people who have developed a closer relationship.

The typical *how are you*↓ with a falling intonation, and its variations, is used as a routine greeting in many places, be they public, such as streets, shops, clinics, even call-back radio etc., as well as private. It has become so routinised that it could be considered a form of ritual that people perform when they meet. Its purpose is more than simply to acknowledge the presence of another person; it is also to somehow relate to that other person, to create some kind of link, however transitory and superficial this link may be. The fact that mostly we respond routinely without giving an accurate reflection of how we really feel testifies that there is some form of politeness at play. Not responding to a greeting is noticed and accountable; it represents a deviant form of interaction where there is some threat to one's face. It is relevant at this point to quote John Heritage, one of the few sociologists who has studied conversation in detail:

And in the case of greetings, it may be these latter considerations which influence the ways in which we design our talk, constraining us to adopt the institutionalised form regardless of our private desires and personal inclinations.

(1984:268)

Even though greeting may appear simple, it is actually complex and will differ according to the social and physical contexts. The Australian way of greeting, therefore, needs to be brought to the students' attention, regardless of their age, and discussed by comparing with greetings in their first language. You may be surprised by the amount of discussion this can generate, and it provides a good opportunity to explore issues such as frustration arising from a misunderstood sociocultural norm. In fact, discussions such as these are very beneficial for both the learners and teacher.

They enable the teacher to find out about students' misconceptions of particular features, as well as to measure students' general understanding and appreciation of conversational norms. Moreover, these discussions can be very informative in learning how a particular speech act is performed in the students' cultures. This can be equally enlightening for fellow students who at the same time can discover each other's cultural norms and behaviour. In addition, learners may take this opportunity to vent any negative feeling they may have in relation to a particular Australian sociocultural norm, as well as relate an anecdote on the topic. Such an activity offers excellent opportunities for students to use language in a meaningful way.

Let's have a closer look at what information the act of greeting contains. If we compare the three greetings below, which are all taken from authentic spoken interactions,⁴ we can infer, to some extent, information about the culture, including the physical and social contexts. That is, the kind of place where the greeting occurs as well as the relationship between the interactants and their status, i.e. their social distance.

Let's try to analyse briefly each greeting:

Greeting 1

- 1 L: *hi John*
- 2 J: *g'day mate how's it goin'?*
- 3 L: *oh not bad*
- 4 J: *what's new?*

Terms of address such as "John" are highly cultural as they reveal the social network of a society. The naming also informs us about the kind of relationship the two interactants may have: that they are on a first-name basis tells us they already know each other. Further, what follows at line 2 shows some familiarity with the term "mate" as well as the topic opener "what's new?". So we can infer that the social distance is probably small; they may be friends or colleagues. In reality, they are colleagues who get on very well. Then, there is the greeting itself "g'day mate how's it goin'" which has a distinct Australian overtone with "g'day mate". The health inquiry is a pseudo health inquiry as one does not really want to hear about one's health in detail. In other countries like Spain or Italy, the health inquiry is not necessarily responded to in this way, but may be taken as a real question, so the interlocutor may give it a full response. The response at line 3 is more typical of an Anglo greeting. In Asia, greeting is done differently. For instance, in China, it is common to ask, "Have you eaten?" (Barraja-Rohan & Pritchard 1997). In relation to physical context, the interactants are actually facing each other.

Now, let's look at Greeting 2 and notice the differences and similarities:

Greeting 2

- 1 B: *hello*
- 2 P: *hi Betty, Pat here:*
- 3 B: *hi*
- 4 P: *what's the news?*
- 5 B: *didn't Valerie tell you?*

The interaction starts with "Hello" at line 1 followed by "Hi Betty, Pat here" which presupposes a different setting to the previous greeting. The *hello* is clearly a response to the phone ringing, in other words, to a summons to respond to a telephone call. Then the caller greets the respondent and identifies himself at line 2. In turn, the respondent reciprocates the greeting by responding with *hi*. Hence the first three lines give us information in relation to the physical context, which is that of a telephone conversation. Telephone openings are also culturally loaded and do not necessarily start in this way⁵. For instance, in French telephone conversations, the caller very often will apologise for disturbing the recipient. In Mandarin, the respondent may want to know who the caller is and may say after "hello": "who's that?" or "who are you looking for?". In Arabic, it seems that the caller usually asks about the respondent's family before talking to the person they are calling.

In the case of Greeting 2 the terms of address suggest that the interactants know each other well enough. In fact, in this conversation the interactants are brother and sister.

Finally, let's turn to greeting 3:

Greeting 3

1 CC: *Carlton Carpets*

2 PR: *ah good morning my name is Pat Riley I was recently given a quotation
3 for some carpet*

4 CC: *right*

What is striking in this greeting is the opening at line 1 where there is the identification of a business and a lack of the usual greeting of *hi/hello how are you* type. Instead, at line 2 after a minimal response indicating that PR indeed has the right company, there is a formal greeting "good morning", followed by a name identification and a reason for the call (which continues beyond line 4). This information reveals that the physical context is another telephone conversation but of a very different kind to the preceding one. In effect, Greeting 3 is a business call, so the social distance is greater and the interactants need to identify themselves: CC identifies the company he works for, being a representative of that company, and PR as a customer. So in this case we are moving away from casual conversation to an institutionalised form of talk, which contains restrictive rules, such as talking about the business at hand and not personalising the encounter. The language can become more formal, and both interactants adhere to their respective roles of salesman and customer.

It would be interesting to find out from your adult students how they would perform such a call in their cultures. The only information I was able to obtain on this matter concerns the ending of such a business call, and this was obtained by accident through a negative transfer, after role-playing the whole conversation with my adult students. In fact, my Lebanese and Eritrean students informed me that if they were the businessman in question they would end the conversation by saying congratulations, in effect congratulating the customer for buying a carpet. Congratulating a customer indeed happens in Australian transactional English, but in relation to buying an important item, such as a car or a house.

In the three examples of greeting given, we have observed that the physical context varies as well as the social one and these have a cultural component. As a result, the language used changes and this aspect is worth pointing out to learners.

Suggested classroom activity

- 1 Discuss how greeting is done in Australian English and explain why it is performed this way and in what situations. Give a few examples.
- 2 Make students aware of the role that intonation and sentence stress play.
- 3 Compare the Australian greeting with greeting in the learners' first language.
- 4 Get your students to stand up and mill around the class and put them in different situations where they will have to greet: a) a friend and b) an acquaintance or teacher. Do it with them.
- 5 Pair up your students and get them to role-play a shopkeeper and a customer.
- 6 Choose a few pairs to perform the role-play in front of the class to give them feedback and check what they are doing.
- 7 Revise and discuss any points that may come up in the role-plays.

Other speech acts to be considered for teaching are taking-leave, inviting, making a request, complaining, apologising, refusing, complimenting etc., as they often reveal much about the culture, as culture is deeply embedded in language.

Compliment and self-deprecation

Compliment is another sociocultural norm of interaction. Complimenting is a delicate matter as a number of factors can play a part. For instance, the type of compliment might be influenced by the gender of the addressee and the speaker. A male complimenting a female may be a more risky act since the compliment may be interpreted as sexually motivated. Social distance or relationship between the interactants is another influencing factor, whether the interactants are relatives, friends, acquaintances or strangers. For instance, a compliment such as "you're looking well" in Compliment 2 below would not usually occur between two strangers or an adult and a child. Equally, power/status differences may also be important. For instance, complimenting a superior may be intended as flattery as the speaker may have an ulterior motive beyond simply making a pleasing observation about the interlocutor.

The compliment produced invariably has an effect on the addressee, and whether it is the intended effect or not depends on the way it is uttered, the addressee's personality and his/her cultural background. The object and tone of the compliment may influence the addressee's response inasmuch as the latter assesses the compliment and the speaker's intention in proffering it. Given all the factors described above, it can be said that complimenting is a culture specific act (see the following regarding cultural differences in compliments: Wolfson 1981, 1986; Barnlund and Araki 1985; Herbert 1989; Lwandowska-Tomaszczyk 1989; Chen 1993; Ylänne-McEwen 1993). In effect, when I presented Compliment 1 (below) to my French students, they reacted

with puzzlement upon hearing "oh thanks" in response, as it is not the usual response to a compliment in French. Indeed, in French, accepting a compliment may simply be a non-verbal acknowledgement. In English, a compliment is usually accepted, and the typical response is in the form of a thank-you (see Hunter 1994). Note that in another language, such as Mandarin Chinese, more often than not the response to a compliment is denial (see Ye 1995), however acceptance also occurs (see Li Kaining this volume; Yuan 1996).

Compliment 1

- 1 A: *hey your hair looks really good today*
- 2 L: *oh thanks*
- 3 A: *have you had it cut?*
- 4 L: *no but it needs cutting badly*
- 5 A: *it looks really good.*

(Barraja-Rohan & Pritchard 1997:117)

The first compliment occurs between two female colleagues whereas the second one takes place between a male and a female colleague.

Compliment 2

- 1 R: *oh hi Mary*
- 2 M: *hi how are you↓*
- 3 R: *you're looking well*
- 4 R: *oh thank you very much*

In both compliments 1 and 2, the topic of the compliment is personal appearance, and the response is an acceptance in the form of a thank-you, which seems to be a typical response in Australian English. Therefore, it is worth investigating with your students 1) what sort of compliments people offer in their culture, to whom and in what circumstances, and 2) what response is appropriate.

However, the opposite of a compliment is a criticism, which requires tact, as a criticism is a face threatening act. The same Hong Kong student mentioned earlier, Lee, conveyed to me that she once voiced her honest opinion about her Anglo-Australian mother-in-law's hair, which amounted more to a criticism than a well-meaning observation as intended. Indeed, this is what she said to her mother-in-law: "I don't like your hair." Lee explained to the class that she meant well in being honest, so she did not understand why such a frank remark would upset her mother-in-law. It is possible that frankness and directness may be appropriate in her culture in this situation, but when it comes to personal appearance and quality, one has to be more tactful in Australian English. Lee did not appreciate that this sort of remark was not appropriate in this case, and that indirectness would have been more appropriate (see Li Kaining this volume; Ishihara and Toyoda this volume).

She did not view her remark as a criticism but as a valued honest opinion. Yet, this sort of remark in Australian English is usually taken as a criticism. Criticising others is a delicate matter and involves considering a number of factors, such as

social distance, power or status, the tone of the voice, and the object of the criticism. However, self-criticism is a different matter and is more accepted.

Self-criticism is generally viewed as self-deprecation as it indicates modesty rather than self-worth or boasting about oneself, which is a behaviour usually frowned upon in the Australian context. There is some cultural value reflected in showing modesty, which is worth discussing with your adult students. Indeed, a discussion about this particular value and how it is viewed in the students' cultures would surely be very revealing and interesting. The following example, taken from an interaction where both interactants are male friends, illustrates a case of self-deprecation:

Self-deprecation

- 1 *Mc: considering the position I started from [I was hopeless*
- 2 *P: [ah yeh*
- 3 *P: laughter*
- 4 *Mc: laughter*
- 5 *P: modest*
- 6 *Mc: laughter*
- 7 *P: it wasn't that bad. yeah*

Some ethnographic information is required at this stage to fully appreciate this excerpt, in particular why P says "modest" at line 5. This conversation is an interview conducted by P who asks Mc to relate how he became a champion in sailing and got to the Atlanta Olympic Games. At the time of the conversation, Mc was training for his second Olympic Games — Sydney 2000 — in a particular sailing class called Finn. However, Mc had been a world champion for a few consecutive years in another sailing class, Catamaran, not represented at the Olympic Games hence his switch to the Finn class. So "I was hopeless" at line 1 is not to be taken literally but in the context of Mc's performance in the new sailing class, which requires different skills and means that Mc has not yet reached the level he had when he was racing in the Catamaran class. P's "ah yeh" is responding to "considering the position I started from" in the Finn class, and overlaps "I was hopeless". This is initially responded to by P with laughter, which is reciprocated by Mc, and then P produces an evaluative statement "modest" at line 5 and another one at line 7 that shows disagreement with Mc's own evaluation.

To disagree with the speaker who utters a self-deprecatory statement is the usual and preferred response as to agree in this case would reinforce the self-criticism. Sometimes, self-deprecation may be used to get a positive response from the co-conversationalist to improve one's self-image and boost one's morale.

In this section, I have attempted to show that complimenting is another sociocultural norm which needs to be highlighted to learners of English as it requires consideration of a number of elements, such as gender, object of the compliment, circumstance of the compliment (social distance and power), and how the addressee will interpret and respond to it. Criticism, the opposite of a compliment, has been mentioned to indicate the fine line between voicing a well-meaning, frank opinion

and a criticism, which may be misunderstood by learners. Self-deprecation has been explored to demonstrate the delicate nature of criticism, and to show that self-criticism is more acceptable than criticising others, but is usually responded to by disagreeing with its utterer.

Suggested classroom activity — compliment

- 1 Ask some students to leave the room for a few minutes.
- 2 Tell the remaining students what is going to happen. Instruct them to listen to, and if possible, take notes of both the compliment and the response given.
- 3 Fetch one student and pay him/her a compliment.
- 4 Ask the students who have remained in the class to comment on the appropriateness of both the compliment and the response given.
- 5 Fetch a second student and have a student pay him/her a compliment.
- 6 Discuss as in 4) the appropriateness of the compliment and response.
- 7 Continue until all students are back in the room.
- 8 Compare how compliments are accomplished in Australian English and the students' languages. Note the differences and similarities.
- 9 As a group, study the examples given here and ask students to role-play them (only if the compliments are appropriate for them).

Small talk

Small talk, oddly enough, is another sociocultural norm. It is primarily used not just to pass the time, but also to create or maintain a rapport, hence it is used for phatic communion (see Pavlidou 2000 for a definition and a discussion of phatic communion). In Australia, small talk is widely used in everyday life, in private and public spheres, such as the workplace, between professionals and with tradesmen, in the street, on public transport, etc. It has a definite function of smoothing over relationships so that some form of bond is created between the interactants, and is often a premise to other kinds of talk, be they institutional or casual. To make small talk is actually quite difficult for a learner of English as no topic is predetermined, and often no rapport has been established as it frequently happens between two strangers or acquaintances. It is therefore worth investigating this sociocultural norm with your adult students.

Suggested classroom activity (older adolescents/adults)

- 1 Discuss with your students what small talk is about.
- 2 Work out with the class what topics are appropriate/inappropriate in small talk.
- 3 Give students different situations in which small talk would be used, such as with the hairdresser, plumber, taxi driver, on the bus/train.
- 4 Get students to role-play those situations and discuss any difficulties they may have encountered in their role-plays.
- 5 Ask students if small talk would be conducted in their first language, in what situations and with whom.

- 6 Encourage students to have small talk in real life with their neighbours, on public transport with elderly people, etc.
 - 7 Get students to relate/compare their experiences.
- (See Barraja-Rohan & Pritchard 1997 for examples of small talk and activities)

Politeness: directness versus indirectness

Social interactions are governed by a politeness system which aims to facilitate contacts between individuals. To this end rules are put in place, and for an interaction to work properly, they must be applied. However, violating one or more rules may result in offending an individual, thus threatening the interaction. Each culture has specific rules of politeness, which are based on a particular value system. For instance, according to O'Driscoll (1996:24) the west has "horizontal" societies⁶ where people "feel the closest to those of the same rank and role". For instance, teenagers tend to identify more with other teenagers than with their parents. As a result, high status does not involve many obligations. Indeed, there is a tight limit on impositions, so in Australian society personal freedom, hence time, is valued and must be respected. As a result, there are expressions such as "to have one's own space", "sorry to bother you" or "I won't take much of your time" and efforts are generated toward not imposing on others. Further, care is taken particularly when the imposition and/or the social distance is great. A good example is reflected in Request 2 (reproduced below). The request is carefully phrased because the speaker is asking the listener to perform some action for her benefit.

Consider lines 5 and 11 where expressions such as "I was wondering" preface the request, and modals such as "if you could do" and "would that be okay?", as well as hedges like "a little bit of duty" and "and maybe finishing some of the kits" are used in deference to the interlocutor in order to diminish the imposition.

Request 2

- 1 M: *I want to ask you a favour*
- 2 R: *mmhm*
- 3 M: *em you were telling me before that you're gonna be working next week*
- 4 R: *yeah*
- 5 M: *and I was wondering if you could do a little bit of duty in the self-*
- 6 *access centre, keeping an eye on things*
- 7 R: *not a problem*
- 8 M: *and maybe finishing some of the kits that we've been developing*
- 9 *[for Bendigo Road*
- 10 R: *[not a problem*
- 11 M: *would that be okay?*
- 12 R: *no-not a problem at all, yeah.*

In contrast, societies from Southeast Asia, like the Japanese, or from the Gulf states are "vertical" (see O'Driscoll 1996), in that hierarchy plays a larger role as high status involves more responsibility. For instance, an employer has obligations towards his/her employees in relation to their welfare (like housing and transport). Thus, those societies value ties between individuals and the community, and do not see a restriction on the use of time with people of high status. This may explain why a Somali student who was working in a factory was shocked by the language used by his supervisor. In making a request his supervisor had used the form "would you mind". The Somali felt there was no need to be so indirect as in his culture, a request in the workplace was made using direct language, such as an imperative "do this".

On this point I would like to urge some caution as to the use of indirectness. Indeed, confusion can arise from the misunderstanding of what directness is about. Learners may think that Australians use direct language when in fact, in a number of situations, this is not the case, as the example above testifies. Euphemisms and understatements are other examples of indirect language, such as "pass away", "under the weather", "be average", "be different", etc. This is certainly an area that needs to be explored with your (adolescent/adult) students, as well as how politeness is reflected in language such as in Request 2 above.

Politeness is complicated, so it needs to be explained to the students, whether they are children, adolescents or adults. Divergent politeness systems may cause students to react negatively to the Australian one as they fail to understand the principles, values or norms guiding any social interaction. Contrasting and explaining politeness will be of great benefit to students, emphasising that no-one is right or wrong; rather, that different systems operate and the key to cross-cultural communication is to understand them.

Suggested classroom activity

- 1 Show examples of language in various situations, such as ordering a drink, buying something in a shop, asking the time or direction, inquiring about a class or course, etc.
- 2 Discuss the use of politeness in those examples.
- 3 Compare those examples with the students' first languages.
- 4 Have students role-play those situations.
- 5 Clarify any points arising from the role-plays.

Conclusion

I have endeavoured to show how language and culture are interconnected in everyday conversation. Culture is constantly reproduced in any interaction, be it in the spoken or written form, and for reasons of space the latter has not been dealt with in this chapter (for cross-cultural differences in writing, consult Clyne 1994, Connor 1996, Kaplan 1986). However culture as such can be elusive as it is deeply embedded in language and is not necessarily a conscious process. This is the very reason why we, as educators, need to explicitly instruct students about this.

A proportion of the cross-cultural information found in this chapter was provided by my students, and collected while I was teaching adult ESL learners. Talking about matters related to sociocultural norms of interaction, body language, non-verbal features such as silence, and overlapping etc, has led to fascinating discussions with my students. In addition, teaching cultural aspects of language is not only essential but very rewarding for students. Indeed, they become empowered. The pay-offs are immediate since we deal with topics that concern them directly and are meaningful in their daily interactions. I hope that you will get as much enjoyment as I have in teaching these cultural aspects of language, and that this chapter, as well as the others in this collection, will lead you to undertake your own cross-cultural research with your students.

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Notes

- 1 ESL: English as a Second Language
- 2 The square bracket indicates the point where the overlap starts and ends.
- 3 Even though individual variations exist, there are overall patterns in each culture and speakers of that culture often typify the general pattern.
- 4 Note that to respect participants' anonymity in the excerpts given in this chapter, pseudonyms have been used or just the first letter of their name.
- 5 See Liddicoat (1995, 2000), as well as Pavlidou (2000) in relation to the differences in Greek and German telephone openings and closings.
- 6 There is always the danger of generalisations, so caution is necessary in reading this kind of broad categorisation. Even though western nations share common traits, there are also differences in relation to how politeness is perceived (see Béal 1990 for a comparison between French and Australians).

6 Teaching French culture in language use

Chantal Crozet and Louise Maurer

Introduction

The teaching of culture in French classes in Australia is often limited to the teaching of the obvious, the explicit expression of French culture. For this reason, culture is seldom taught as part of language because culture as embedded in language use is not easily noticeable. Typically students of French in primary and secondary schools do cultural assignments on French regions or cities, French food, French castles. In textbooks such as *Ça bouge* for example, culture is taught as background items; students are taught about the French calendar, the French school system, France's geography, baguettes, croissants, crêpes and frog-legs etc.

All this cultural knowledge is valuable and needs to be imparted to students, but it represents a limited approach to teaching culture. The challenge for many teachers of French is to expand the concept of culture as "background information" to culture as part of the every day language. It is to learn how to teach the implicit expression of culture or as the French would say "le non-dit" (the unsaid). Implicit cultural knowledge is not easy to notice and it cannot be taught in the same way explicit cultural (castles, food, geography etc.) and linguistic knowledge (grammar, pronunciation) are taught. The teaching of implicit cultural knowledge in language classes is complex and requires a reflective approach to teaching both language and culture.

The objective of part one of this chapter is to give French teachers and interested readers insights into some implicit aspects of French culture. Part one deals with what is sometimes referred to as the "communicative profile" of French people in France, that is the general cultural traits which shape the way most people communicate in France. This is not to discount, regional, social or gender, individual or national variations. In France and in countries where French is spoken as the main national language, cultural traits may diverge significantly. However the information

provided can be used as an entry point into French "cultures". It can be used as a set of pointers to know where culture is likely to be found in language use, and to encourage teachers of French and their students to carry out their own observation and research in their classrooms. What matters most in teaching culture is not so much the imparting of a set of fixed or absolute "cultural traits", which do not exist in reality, as general cultural traits are always mixed with individual variations and are affected by the particular contexts in which they occur. What is important is to give students entry points into the foreign culture and the ability to notice culture and explore its many forms of expression.

Part two of this chapter presents classroom activities for teaching French culture in language use which have been successfully implemented by the authors. The classroom activities proposed here illustrate the intercultural approach to language teaching discussed in the introductory chapters of this book.

Part one: The French communicative profile

Culture and particularly culture in language use is variable and context dependent. These two attributes of culture are often used to argue that because culture is not static it is therefore not teachable and that any attempt to render the more implicit expressions of culture graspable leads inevitably to stereotypical representations. This argument leaves language teachers with no accessible cultural input to initiate the teaching of culture in language use. To help their students notice cultural differences, especially not so visible differences, teachers of French need some input, some knowledge of the more implicit expressions of French culture. In order to see culture in language one must first know what culture in language is likely to look like.

Most of the framework discussed in chapter three has been retained to present some of the main implicit cultural codes which influence today the way a majority of French native speakers communicate. French cultural traits are discussed under four headings:

- The importance of speaking in French culture (*importance de la parole*)
- The management of interpersonal relationships (*la conduite des relations personnelles*)
- Some rules of politeness (*règles de politesse*)
- The level of ritualisation (*degré de ritualisation*)

The importance of speaking in French culture (*importance de la parole*)

The importance people give to speaking and being silent in France and Australia is significantly different. It is a difference which has been noted also between French and British speakers of English.

Collett (1993:174) for instance describes the British perception of French verbal expressiveness as "unnecessary". To non-native speakers of French, French people can come across as spending too much time talking for its own sake. To illustrate this point, Collett quotes André Maurois who wrote to a French friend about to visit England, warning him about differences between England and France:

Do not talk too much until you have found your depth. In France it is rude to let a conversation drop: in England it is rash to keep it up. No one there will blame you for silence. When you have not opened your mouth for three years they will think: This Frenchman is a quiet nice fellow...

The importance French people give to speaking in everyday life as well as the way they talk and what they talk about can be misconstrued by non-native speakers of French as being a form of imposition, invasion, "they talk too much". It can also lead to negative stereotyping: the French are arrogant, pushy, too direct etc.

The French do not think they speak too much. From a French perspective speaking, communicating, interacting with others is a fun part of life. Meals for instance are social events. A meal is not solely for feeding or enjoyment of food it is also a highly valued time for discussion and exchanges. Sharing one's opinions is important in France. It is a way to create rapport and intimacy. It is not meant to be intrusive. As noted by Béal (1992a) the French value the notion of engagement, as in "engaging" in conversation, to share and defend one's views. Anglo-Australians tend to get involved rather than "engaged" in conversation. The notion of involvement suggests more distance, a sense of participation in conversation rather than full personal engagement.

In her study of cultural norms of interaction between French and Australian people in a work environment, Béal (1992a:90) illustrates this particular tension between the two cultures when she reports the following comment made by one Australian person she interviewed:

It seems important that French people have an opinion on just about every topic there is you know, I'll have, I must have an opinion on what is happening in Russia, I must have an opinion on, you know, Paris, whether I like it or I didn't like it, why I don't like it, it's all set, you know um of what I think of London, the English people, what's happening in Australia and the political situation (Béal 1992a:90).

For the French, expressing one's opinion is one of the expected rules of social behaviour. Silence can be seen as a threat. Daily social encounters to be successful must be filled by a continuous flow of conversation (Kerbrat-Orecchioni 1994:65). We

will see further how this cultural trait underpins other aspects of French behaviour in conversations.

The management of interpersonal relationships (*la conduite des relations personnelles*)

Non-verbal language

French society tends to be very tactile (Morris 1977), and values confrontation over consensus in conversations. These traits express themselves in the following cultural codes: kissing routine, gestures and other non-verbal behaviour.

French people tend to engage their bodies a lot more in conversations than Anglo-Australian people do or they do so in different ways.

For instance greetings in French such as "bonjour" are usually accompanied by two to four kisses on the cheeks (depending on the geographical location) in semi-formal and familiar interactions. In familiar conversations, more often than not, kisses alone are used for greetings (Traverso 1993).

Both Frijhoff (1991) and Collett (1993) give an interesting historical perspective on French kissing routine. Frijhoff suggests that:

Holding the shoulders and kissing the cheeks is an original French peasant custom adopted by urban culture, probably through migration, but with one important change: in the countryside, the affection shown by the gesture could be measured by the sound of the kisses on the cheeks; in urban culture body sounds are reprehensible. Hence perhaps the reinvestment of affection in the number of the kisses (Frijhoff 1991:224).

So the louder the kiss the lesser the need to repeat it. Collett's research on the history of kissing routine also found that:

The habit of greeting strangers with a kiss was peculiar to England and people kissed on the mouth up until the 16th century. In England there was a convention, in addition to kissing, which allowed men to touch a woman's breasts during the greeting, provided they were "kissing kin" and she was young and unmarried and the disappearance of wholesale kissing from England may have been due to the introduction of French manners (Collett 1993:96).

It is a delightful irony that a somewhat British stereotype on the behaviour of French people could have initially been part of British culture and was discouraged by the French. Historical perspective on cultural traits provides interesting content for the French classroom. It will help learners appreciate the changing and evolving nature of cultural codes.

Physical contact, touching, a short distance between speakers are common in French society. However this physical closeness can be perceived by Australian people as intrusive of one's personal space. The management of space between speakers is

highly cultural. Learners of French need to be alerted that it is a potential source of tension and uneasiness between French and Australian cultures.

Differences of types and meaning of gestures can also be noted between French and Australian cultures. No comprehensive research has been done in this area. However some illustration of French emblematic gestures is available in the work of Calbris and Montredon (1986). Emblematic gestures are gestures which have a meaning on their own although they can be accompanied by colloquial expression. Once learners of French have been introduced to some of the most common French emblematic gestures they will be able to observe them and understand their meaning in French films and other authentic video materials. The use of French non-verbal language can also help learners engage more fully (with body and emotions) in the practice of French conversation in the classroom. Gassin (1992) has demonstrated that competent bilingual speakers have absorbed the non-verbal language of their second language and moreover that the inappropriate use of non-verbal language can impede the development of oral skills in the target language.

Terms of address and greetings

French teachers know the basic difference between the use of *"tu"* and *"vous"*, the familiar versus the formal forms of second person pronouns. However teachers seldom teach the complex socio-cultural rules for using both pronouns appropriately. The fact that the French also have two verbs to negotiate the use of *"tu"* and *"vous"* between speakers reflects the socio-cultural importance and complexity of their appropriate use. Those two verbs are *"tutoyer"* and *"vouvoyer"*, literally meaning, the act of saying *"tu"* and the act of saying *"vous"*. *"Vouvoyer"* is what people who do not know each other do as a matter of course (except for children who use *"tu"* among themselves) in most situations. The *"tu"* will have to be negotiated. For example, a new employee in an office on her first or second day at work will reach an agreement with her colleagues over the choice of *"tu"* or *"vous"* for each of the relationships she will have. She will have to ask for instance *"Est-ce que je peux vous tutoyer?"* (can I say *"tu"* to you?) to indicate she desires a not so formal way of interacting with a particular colleague.

Variables such as age and context will largely influence the choice between *"tu"* and *"vous"* and whether a title plus surname or a first name alone will be used. For instance, in a work environment more and more people use a first name (meaning we know each other well) with *"vous"* (meaning we are not friends) while between two close friends first names plus *"tu"* will be used. There are also discrepancies between speakers of different generations. Béal (1992b) distinguishes between three age groups which could be used as a guideline for a learner of French to know when to use or not to use *"tu"*.

Following are some guidelines for students for the use of *"tu"* and *"vous"* and titles.

In informal/familiar contexts

- with individuals below 25 years of age, "tu" is used in most circumstances;
- with the post sixty-eight generation, that is with people now aged below fifty, "tu" tends to be used more widely;
- for the older generation, "tu" is normally restricted to relatives or intimate friends.

In formal/public/work contexts

In formal/public/work contexts between adults "vous" is always used at the start of encounters. The switch to "tu" needs to be negotiated (ie. "*Est-ce que je peux vous tutoyer*" — can I say "tu" to you). In school environments, at primary level children will address their teachers using "vous" but the teachers will address the children using "tu". At secondary level, "vous" is reciprocal between teachers and students.

Use of titles

The use of titles such as "Madame" or "Monsieur" are still widely used in France in every day interactions and exclusively in combination with "vous", "Mademoiselle" is used now only to address young and teenage girls. In Australia the terms Madam and Sir are reserved to more formal contexts. In France for instance, children in schools will frequently call their teacher Madame or Monsieur. Both terms can also be followed by the work status of the person who is being addressed. For example on entering the principal's office in a school one would commonly say: "*Bonjour Madame la directrice*".

The valuing of confrontation over consensus

The importance of expressing one's opinions in French culture has been mentioned earlier. This also means that French people tend to volunteer information more readily than Australian people when asked questions, especially in familiar conversations.

French people on the whole like discussing and arguing and even find pleasure in disagreeing with each other. Confrontation of opinion is used as a process to reach consensus. Kerbrat-Orecchioni (1994) notes:

Chez nous, le consensus est généralement jugé trop mou et la conversation vire facilement à la discussion, où règnent le moi, je et l'esprit de contradiction.

(Among us, consensus is usually considered too soft, and conversaton easily turns into discussion, where the me, I and the tendency to contradict dominates.) (Orecchioni 1994)

Béal (1993:102-3) identifies the differences in the acceptance of conflict between French and Australian people as a cause of negative stereotyping from both communities. Australians can find the French style of overtly defending one's opinion irritating and conversely the French can find the non-committal Australian behaviour hypocritical. Learners of French need to learn to understand cultural traits embedded in individual modes of interaction. In the examples given above it is clear that negative stereotyping needs to be reflected upon.

Different degrees of allowance of expression of emotions

Recent research in discourse analysis has acknowledged that each society has its own "emotionology" that is its particular system which regulates both the allowance and expression of emotions (Wierzbicka 1999). There are marked differences between French and Australian cultures in this area.

According to King (1978) who studied Australian cultural traits, Australian people tend to be non-committal in their interactions with others. They have a tendency of not wanting to know and not wanting to be known, in other words distance is often preferred over confrontation to maintain consensus as discussed earlier. This general cultural trait also explains why the display of emotions is not as valued in Australian society as it is in French society. For the French the expression of emotions goes along with the need to engage fully and personally in conversations where for Australian people the reverse applies: the overt expression of emotions is too committal.

For the French, the Australian (or British) non expression of emotions can be extremely irritating. This is exemplified by the comments of a Frenchman working with English colleagues quoted in Geoffroy's research (2000):

Et moi, de temps en temps, je trouve que c'est bien de pouvoir taper sur la table de leur part ou de la nôtre et c'est vrai que le peu de fois où je l'ai fait, tout le monde était surpris: mais que se passe-t-il, pourquoi tu t'énerves? and further 'Ce qui m'horripilait le plus, c'est que c'était toujours dans un calme, dans une neutralité implacable avec un grand sourire, et personne ne s'énerve jamais, et parfois c'est très pénible parce qu'on a envie de...

(And I, every now and then, I find that it is good to be able to slam one's fist on the table, for them and us, and it is true that the few times when I did it, everybody was surprised: "but what is going on, why are you getting so excited" and "What I couldn't stand the most, is that it was always in an implacable calmness and neutrality and with a big smile, and no one ever got excited and sometimes it is very unpleasant because one feels like...")
(Geoffroy 2000:42).

What is interesting in this instance is that the man not only would have liked to be able to express himself emotionally but he also believes that it would have been good for English people to have done the same. He does recognise the differences as cultural, and he also puts a judgement on it; somehow the French way is better than the English behaviour (ie. "it's good for them and us to be able to slam one's fist on the table").

Accepting cross-cultural differences in communication just for what they are, that is taking them simply as a different way of expression and of seeing the world, is difficult. It is easier to judge and dismiss rather than potentially enjoy behaviour which is challenging to us.

Some rules of politeness (*règles de politesse*)

To understand how French and Australian politeness operates it is useful to refer to the notion of face and positive versus negative politeness as presented in chapter two. According to Brown & Levison (1987) every individual has two faces. The negative face (or negative politeness) corresponds to one's need to protect one's own sense of personal privacy. This can refer to personal space, time, possessions, and anything a culture might consider private (for example, in the Chinese and Japanese chapters of this book, the authors identify income as something that is not considered private in these cultures). The positive face (or positive politeness) corresponds to one's need to project a positive image of oneself when interacting with others.

France is a society like most western societies where respect for one's privacy is very important. Obviously this varies within western countries. English and Australian people for instance are far more protective of their privacy than the French. In French society along with negative politeness, positive politeness is also highly valued, hence the profusion of compliments in every day conversations (Traverso 1993) or overdone expressions such as "*merci mille fois*" (literally "thank you a thousand times" meaning "thank you so much").

In everyday interactions, Béal (1992b: 280-284) has noticed some interesting differences between French people and Australians with regards to the protection of face. She suggests that Australians focus on preserving face in the short term (that of the duration of the interaction) where French people are more concerned about long-term preservation of face. This difference would explain why in general Australians prefer to say something to avoid conflict or displeasure at the time of the interaction, in order to maintain harmony between interactants at all costs. On the contrary, the French, focusing on the maintenance of the long term aspect of human relationships, prefer to be more upfront with their thoughts or emotions, to be "sincere" as they see it. They prefer to lose face in the short term if it will protect the relationship in the long term. To illustrate cultural differences in the handling of face Béal (1992b:282) quotes an Australian journalist who very colourfully commented on the frankness of many European countries:

"Many European races, on the other hand, are astonishingly frank. You have a rump like a horse in that skirt, a Dutch friend once announced. Unfortunately, she was right and I may have cried and kicked for a week but I did exchange the skirt" and to conclude "She may not have been able to crack a career as a diplomat, but in the end I found Annelies as refreshing as summer rain." Béal (1992b: 282).

Some further examples of clashes between French and Australian rules of politeness as they often appear in thanking routines and requests will be given in the following paragraphs.

Thanking in French and Australian, examples of cross-cultural clashes

Example one: an authentic extract of interaction between an Australian son and his French mother.

Context: It is dark, at 8pm the mother has come to pick up her eight-year-old son from circus training. The son enters the car:

Son: Hi Mum thanks for picking me up

Mother: Thanks for picking you up! Did you think I wasn't going to come...?

But I'm your mum, of course I was going to come. It's dark and you're little.

Of course I was going to pick you up.

The two people involved in this short interaction haven't understood each other, yet they have understood each other's words and grammar. The problem is in the mismatch of cultural frameworks they are using to communicate. They are very close relatives (mother and son) but brought up in a different culture (the mother is French born, the son is Australian born) and this is enough to create cross-cultural misunderstanding between them. The act of thanking in Anglo-Australian culture and in French culture, in this context, has a different meaning: for the Australian son, it is polite and considerate to thank his mother for picking him up, for the French mother to be thanked by her son for what she considers normal for a parent to do, implies that she is doing him a favour and not her duty, this creates a distance between them from her perspective and she resents it.

French visitors to Australia commonly comment on what they see as (Anglo)-Australians' need to thank everyone for something done for them, especially in interactions between relatives. For instance a French mother-in-law who was visiting Australia commented to one of the authors about her son-in-law's "over" thanking habits in those terms:

What is the matter with him? He is thanking me for everything I do for him, ironing his shirts, cooking, everything! Even picking up the washing, he doesn't have to thank me, I do all this for him because I want to.

In French culture the general tendency is to take for granted that relatives or intimates do things for each other without verbal acknowledgement. Thanking for expected favours are inappropriate and can even offend. Conversely in Anglo-Australian culture thanking routines are a way of saying "I acknowledge that you were not under any obligation to do that for me and I am grateful that you did".

Requests

The word "requests" has been chosen to encompass the many situations in daily life when someone has to ask someone else to do something for him or her.

In both French and Australian cultures there are direct and indirect ways of making requests. The general tendency in both societies is to use "softeners" to make personal requests more polite and less threatening, as Geoffroy (2000: 43) noted between French and English cultures.

For instance in Australian-English one would ask:

"How old are you if I may ask?"

In French the same strategy/type of softener would be used:

Je peux me permettre de vous demander votre âge?

(Literally meaning: Can I allow myself to ask you your age?)

Despite the commonality between French and Australian cultural codes used in performing requests, there exist also significant differences which can cause cross-cultural misunderstandings. Here are some examples of those marked differences below:

The French tend to be more direct, Australians more indirect. The French tend to translate the Anglo-Australian "I would like" or "could you" by "*Je veux*" (I want) and "*peux-tu*" (can you). The indirect Anglo-Australian way of making requests can irritate the French who find this indirectness "overdone", "too polite". The Australians can interpret the French directness in this case as "imposing", "sounds like they are giving you orders".

Béal gives the example of one of her colleagues addressing her in those terms:

"Can you ask him, sorry, that's rude, would you mind asking him to give us a ring?"

A French person in this case would have had no trouble saying:

Tu peux lui demander de nous téléphoner (Can you ask him to ring us?) without feeling the need to rectify the directness of the request.

Many French people forget people's names where most Australians like to be called by their names. In Béal's study, Australians commented that often their French colleagues didn't seem to remember people's names and the French noted that Australians seemed to like to be called by their first names. In Australian culture it is important to remember people's names once introduced to a new person. This explains why in Australian greetings it is the norm to announce who one is: "I am John, and you are..." The French do not go through this routine systematically. One possible explanation is that the frequent use of titles such as *Madame* and *Monsieur* in French also puts less pressure on people to remember personal names in a public/work environment where titles are used more systematically.

Béal (1992:116) further suggests that for the French, the use of first names is a way to express a desire to get closer, to become more intimate with someone hence it is not for everyone.

To indicate that one feels close to someone to whom a request is made, the French will also commonly use a diminutive such as "*mon petit Marcel*" or "*ma petite Christiane*" (my little Marcel, my little Christiane) even in a work environment and while using the "*vous*" form of address as in the following example:

Ma petite Christiane, vous pouvez m'envoyer ce fax de toute urgence

(literally meaning: "my little Christiane, can you send me this fax straight away")

Level of ritualisation (degree de ritualisation)

France belongs to societies with a low degree of ritualisation compared to for example some Arabic societies where the dominant religion, Islam, governs all aspects of daily life (for instance the obligation of praying five times a day and strict observance of fasting in the month of Ramadan). French culture not only allows for deviation from socio-cultural codes, it also praises eccentricity as a marker of a personalised way of showing friendliness. To be too conventional can be interpreted as insincerity hence not genuinely caring (Kerbrat-Orecchioni 1994:110).

It is good to remember and point out to learners of French that France is a multicultural country hence with regard to the use and mode of rituals in French society significant differences will be found depending on the religious allegiance of individuals and ethnic origin. For instance an individual born in France of parents from a North African and Islamic origin might be using French as a first language but in term of cultural codes be influenced by the non-French culture of her/his parents.

Part two: Examples of classroom activities

The classroom activities selected for this chapter have been trialed in class. The first and second activities are named "Terms of address and greetings" and "Did you have a good weekend?" (Crozet), the third deals with letter writing in French (Maurer), the fourth with cultural meaning associated with bread (Maurer), the fifth with modes of oral interaction with a script downloaded from an Internet site (Maurer), and the sixth with essay writing with a focus on culture in French (Maurer). The level at which each activity took place is given after the title. For activities one and two the pedagogical approach was conceived around four teaching phases:

- 1 The awareness-raising phase
- 2 The exploration phase
- 3 The production phase
- 4 The feedback phase.

Activity 1: Terms of address and greetings: beginners and intermediate levels

Awareness-raising phase (noticing)

Learners worked in pairs. They were given a cartoon which portrayed two French native-speakers greeting each other. The students had to identify the type of relationship the two interactants had in terms of social distance, and explain how the viewer of the cartoon received this information. That is, through which linguistic and cultural devices, including specific body language, did the interactants in the cartoon conceive a particular social context between themselves.

After this first exercise, learners were given some situations in which they

were asked to identify in pairs what would be the appropriate terms of address and greetings in different contexts (i.e. between grandparents and grandchildren, university students and teachers etc.):

For example:

- 1 Conversation entre un grand-père et sa petite-fille:
' _____ (Pépé/Grand-père) est-ce que _____ (tu/vous)
_____ (pouvoir) jouer avec moi'
- 2 Conversation entre une belle-mère et son beau-fils:
'Jean _____ (tu/vous) _____ (avoir téléphoné) à ma fille?
- 3 Au lycée entre un professeur et son élève:
' _____ (Madame Poirier/Madame/Christine) est-ce
que _____ (tu/vous) ' _____ (avoir corrigé) nos devoirs?

Exercise on the use of terms of address in French

The answers to the exercise were discussed with the whole class. Teachers can create their own exercise to suit the level of their students and the context in which they teach.

After the two activities mentioned above (the awareness-raising phase), the teacher provided more information on terms of address and greetings in France. An explanation was given about the use of the personal pronouns "tu" and "vous" as well as the importance of the use of titles in French greetings (ie. Monsieur, Madame and name or profession as in "Bonjour Madame la Directrice"). Learners were also given a list and cartoons which illustrated some of the common affectionate terms used to address intimates (ie: "ma puce" (my flea), "mon chou" (my cabbage). The importance of non-verbal language in French greeting sequences was explained and illustrated using short film clips (ie. "kissing" routines).

The exploration phase

Learners then worked in groups of two on a multimedia task (exploration phase). In this task learners were given five scenes which suggested different socio-cultural contexts in which greetings happened. Learners selected a scenario and recorded their conversation. They could listen to their oral production as well as to a model conversation once they had finished their task.

After the multimedia tasks, learners had to perform role-plays (production phase) which were filmed and then shown in class during the feedback sessions.

Activity 2: "Did you have a good weekend?" (or Linking stereotyping with misunderstandings of cultural norms of interaction): Intermediate to advanced levels

The presentation below is meant to represent one possible template for teaching cultural norms in a foreign language.

Béal's (1992b) research was used for the "Did you have a good weekend?" task. Béal has studied cross-cultural misunderstandings between French and Australian employees in a French firm located in Sydney, Australia. Her research was particularly suited for the sort of information needed to work with Australian learners on spoken French language and culture. The following presentation is therefore an example of how research in cross-cultural communication can be directly used in the language classroom.

The activity described below aimed at getting learners to understand and practise the different cultural norms French and Australian people use to answer the question "Did you have a good weekend?". This activity was also used to show how negative stereotyping often stems from misunderstanding cross-cultural differences in human communication.

Awareness-raising phase

Step one

Learners worked in pairs using the target language. They were asked to identify a short list of stereotypes they held, or noticed about French and/or about Australian people. The teacher wrote the new vocabulary on the blackboard as students needed it. After this activity learners reported back to the class. Learners typically identified negative stereotypes about the two cultures such as "French people speak too much, they are too personal, Australians are laid-back, too indirect, etc."

After this brainstorming activity, the teacher suggested that stereotyping often stems from misunderstanding the different cultural norms speakers use in different countries to communicate with each other. As an illustration of this suggestion, the teacher proposed the study of the answer to the simple question "Did you have a good weekend?" in French and Anglo-Australian cultures.

Step two

The teacher asked the whole class for typical answers to the question "Did you have a good weekend?" in an Australian context. The teacher and students worked out what the equivalent answers could be in French.

The aim of this activity was to show learners that the answer to the question "Did you have a good weekend?" could not be so easily translated from one language to another without knowing the appropriate cultural norms speakers in the two cultures used in providing answers.

Next the teacher read out to the class extracts from Béal's (1992b) research in which both French people and Australians explain their frustrations with the different ways both cultures use to answer the question "Did you have a good

weekend?" Following are the two extracts read to the class:

Example one: An Australian comments on the French. The extract was read in English, the learners' first language.

... and they start giving other people's names, and I mean, we don't particularly want to know all these things and yes... they tend to do that. Yeah... they do that in... what could you say..."How was your weekend?" you know normally you say, "Oh good...I,... wouldn't know who they're talking about, you know, they tend to do that sometimes, but, that's all right, I mean, you know, that's fine... They they'll probably go into a lot more detail and, you know, like tell you where they went, and how their kids liked it, what their wife thought about it, whereas... whereas you'll find with an Australian, even though they have got time... they still won't... you...they still won't come out with it all, you know, they'll just say "Oh yes. We had a good time..." and perhaps they'll tell you where they went and that's it. Whereas the French, they'll tend to tell you what...er...what they had to eat, and it it was nice and, you know... (Béal 1992b:206).

Example two: This is an extract of what one French person said about Australians. The extract was read in French to learners.

Oui, ben oui, je me suis rendu compte que c'est vraiment des formules de politesse! (petit rire de dérision). A la limite si on vous pose la question, c'est qu'on veut vous dire "Bonjour. Comment ça va?", en fait ils attendent pas la réponse. Si on pose cette question en français, c'est qu'on s'y intéresse, parce qu'autrement on dirait, "Bonjour, comment ça va?" c'est tout. Bon, mais si effectivement on demande, "Alors, vous avez passé un bon weekend?" ça va...bon, ça encourage à dire: "Qu'est-ce que tu as fait?"... alors que ici (en Australie), à la limite, non c'est bon, "How was your weekend?" mais c'est bon, "Bonjour, comment ça va?" et puis on écoute pas. Ou si, effectivement, si on développe, bon à la limite, ils en attendaient pas autant! (petit rire)... moi je suis resté toujours avec mon réflexe français, j'ai pas changé, si on me demande comment...comment était le weekend, je vais dire ce que j'ai fait pendant mon weekend... (Béal 1992b:206-207).

(Well, yeah, I realise that it's only about being polite (derisive laughter). To a certain extent if someone asks you the question, it's because they want to say to you "Hi. How are you?", in fact they are not expecting an answer. If you ask this question in French, it's because you are interested, because otherwise you would say, "Hi, how are you?" That's all. Yeah, but if effectively you ask "So, did you have a good weekend?". It's going...well, it encourages one to say: "What did you do"... where here (in Australia), to a certain extent, no well it's, "How was your weekend?" but well it's, "Hi, how are you" and then they don't listen. Or else if effectively, if you go on, well to a certain extent, they were not expecting that much! (short laughter)...

I, I've kept my French habit, I have not changed, if someone asks me how...
how was the weekend? I am going to say what I did on the weekend...)

The aim of step two was to make the problem of cross-cultural communication a concrete issue. It brought real life dilemma into the classroom for discussion and analysis. After the reading of the extracts, learners were asked to comment on their responses to them, thoughts and feelings.

Step three

The teacher explained that for Australian people the answer to the question "Did you have a good weekend?" is used mostly as a conversational routine on Monday mornings often as a way to make contact. The expected answer is short, friendly and reciprocal. For French people the answer to the same question is not part of the Monday morning first contact strategy. It is a genuine question which requires a detailed answer. In an Australian context, the answer to the question can of course move beyond the ritualised short answer. If it does so specific rules still apply in the ways a more detailed answer is given.

Béal (1992a and 1992b) identified six differing rules between French and Australian to answer this simple question in ways that are culturally and separately acceptable to both communities.

Learners were given the list of the six differing rules, (see table on next page). They read it in pairs and discussed it. The teacher also showed on an overhead a transcription of a typical French answer to the question "Did you have a good weekend?" as well as a transcription of a typical Australian answer, both transcriptions were authentic data taken from Béal's (1992:212) research.

Exploration phase

After having been presented with the different cultural norms used by French and Australians to answer the question "Did you have a good weekend?", learners worked on a multimedia task. In this task learners had to reconstruct the correct sequence of a conversation in which native speakers displayed norms of interaction appropriate to the context. They were also invited to recognise the norms of interaction which had been brought to their attention during the awareness-raising phase. The conversation was cut in nine segments which were placed in a random order. The user of the task had to listen to each piece, understand the segment narrative and then try to reconstruct the original conversation. The student submitted a short string of characters representing the order of the video segments for assessment. These were communicated to the teacher for assessment using the Internet.

Production phase

After the multimedia task, learners engaged in role-plays in which they acted out a conversation in which they talked about a fictitious weekend using the appropriate French norms of interaction to do so. Learners were given a second option to perform a conversation in which an Australian and a French person were talking about their

Cross-cultural differences between French and Anglo-Australian in answer to the question: "Did you have a good weekend?"

Australiens

1. Posez la question à tout le monde. C'est une routine de conversation pour les Australiens (le lundi matin !).

La réponse est en général courte, amicale, réciproque.

Ask the question to every body. It is a conversational routine for Australians (on Monday mornings). The answer is generally short, friendly and reciprocal.

2. Soyez positif sans être trop enthousiaste.
Be positive without being enthusiastic.

3. Mentionnez les activités typiques d'un weekend.
Mention typical weekend activities.

4. Donnez des faits plutôt que des opinions.
Give facts rather than opinions.

5. Dites seulement ce qui est utile et intéressant pour celui qui écoute.
Say only what is useful and interesting for the hearer.

6. Employez un style de conversation qui montre que vous êtes attentionné envers l'autre.
Use a conversational style which shows care for the other:

- N'interrompez pas la personne qui parle.
Don't interrupt the person who is talking;
- Ecoutez avec attention. Attendez que la personne qui parle ait complètement fini de parler pour dire ce que vous voulez dire.
Listen attentively. Wait until the person who is talking stops speaking completely to say what you want to say.

Français

1. Vous n'êtes pas obligé de poser la question à tout le monde. Elle ne fait pas vraiment partie de la routine française de conversation du lundi matin.

You don't have to ask the question to every one. It is not part of French conversational routine on Monday mornings.

2. Si la question est posée: donnez ou attendez-vous à recevoir une réponse détaillée.
If the question is asked: expect to receive a detailed answer.

3. Soyez sincère, donnez votre opinion sur ce que vous avez fait le weekend. Décrivez vos sentiments, même ceux qui sont négatifs.
Be sincere, give your opinion on what you did on the weekend. Describe your feelings, including negative feelings.

4. Soyez amusant ou "vivant" dans votre description. Dramatisez ce que vous avez fait.
Be entertaining or lively in your descriptions. Dramatise what you have done.

5. Montrez que vous connaissez les gens et les endroits dont parle l'autre. Parlez de votre famille et amis.
Show you know the people and places the other mentions. Talk about your family and friends

6. Employez un style de conversation qui montre que vous êtes intéressé par ce que dit l'autre:
Use a conversational style which shows you are interested in what the other is saying:

- Répétez et ajoutez à ce que dit la personne.
Repeat and add to what the person is saying.
- Interrompez la personne qui parle.
Interrupt the person who is talking.
- Parlez en même temps.
Overlap each other when talking.

weekend in French using their respective cultural norms and hence clashing. Learners were reminded to integrate in their role-plays, features of spoken grammar, familiar vocabulary and French gestures where appropriate. The role-plays were performed in front of the whole class and filmed by either the teacher or some of the learners.

Feedback phase

During the production phase the whole class watched the role-plays performed by the learners. A group discussion followed after watching each role play where the class commented on the appropriateness of the performance in terms of use of cultural norms, body language and other features of spoken language taught during the module. The performers of each role play were also invited to comment on how they felt about "acting French". The discussion brought up questions such as: "should we be speaking like the French if we went to France?" or "What if we don't like the way the French talk about themselves and all their gestures?". The teacher at this point suggested that learners needed to distinguish between what they had to know to understand French people culturally and the behaviour that could be expected of them in a foreign culture. The discussion led to the understanding that learning to speak in a foreign language was not about becoming parrots of a foreign code of behaviour but about finding a comfortable place for oneself in between one's first culture and the norm of the target culture.

Activity 3: Letter writing in French: beginners to advanced levels

Letter writing is a culture specific activity which encompasses many of the same items listed under speech acts in the study of oral communication, such as greetings, requests, invitations acceptance and refusal, complimenting, thanking, presenting excuses or even apologising. For each of these functions there is a corresponding model which can easily be found in books of the type: "the perfect secretary" which deal specifically with the subject or in books for foreign language learners or even in dictionaries (Collins-Robert 1998:48-54). Textbooks for beginners often include a few if incomplete examples of letter writing.

An important point to emphasise first is that in French, letter writing for any purpose other than communicating with friends or family is governed by very strict rules. Moreover, native speakers and foreigners alike have to pay particular attention to the choice of formula, particularly in the heading and closing sections of a letter. In certain circumstances, an error may mean that a letter considered badly written will remain unanswered. In teaching these conventions and practices therefore it is important to enlarge the discussion in class to the purposes of letter writing in context rather than limit it to the choice of formula.

In "La politesses des autres. Regards croisés franco-anglais sur quelques éléments de politesse", Geoffroy (2000) reminds us that if it is important to see that the words used to write a letter, especially in the opening and closing formula, are not to be

taken literally and represent set phrases corresponding to specific usage in context, they nevertheless carry a cultural meaning:

Les formules "yours faithfully" et "yours sincerely" concernent les valeurs de fidélité et de sincérité, tandis qu'en français diverses formules font appel à la notion de sentiments. Lorsqu'on cherche "kindest regards" dans un dictionnaire bilingue on trouve la traduction "meilleurs souvenirs", qui trahit la notion primitive d'égards ou d'estime contenue dans "regards". Nous trouvons dans les formules anglaises les valeurs d'honnêteté et de tact dues à celui auquel le courrier est adressé. Les formules françaises semblent souligner une plus grande intensité émotive, puisqu'on peut exprimer ses sentiments et faire appel au souvenir.

(The formulae "yours faithfully" and "yours sincerely" speak of loyalty and sincerity, whereas in French a number of formulae are linked with feelings. When one looks up "kindest regards" in a bilingual dictionary, one finds it translated as "meilleurs souvenirs". This carries the notion of consideration and respect present in "regards". The English formulae include values of honesty and tact attributed to the person to whom the mail is addressed. The French formulae, on the other hand, seem to display a higher emotional content since it is possible to express one's emotions and appeal to memory.) (Geoffroy 2000:42)

The rules governing letter writing have to be accepted. For example, English speaking learners may find the fact that a woman is not supposed to send her "sentiments" to a man in the closing formula in a letter amusing and of no great consequence, but they must be aware that to add a "chér" before the name of a person one does not know in the heading may mean that the rest of the letter will not be read. "Cher/chère" followed by first name is only used when some form of close relation has been established and "chér" followed by "Monsieur" or "chère" followed by "Madame" is used for addressing a person one knows only a little. However, "cher/chère" followed by name and surname is not used. In circumstances where the person writing the letter does not know the correspondant personally or when the correspondant is older than the letter writer, it is wise to stay with the words "Monsieur" or "Madame" or the title, such as "Monsieur le Directeur" for example.

Furthermore, it is best to have the learners understand that it is not only a matter of picking the right formula in a book but that it is also necessary to exercise judgement as to the situation. Although each letter answers to a specific format according to its function, thinking in terms of function to write a letter is not enough. Of equal importance are matters such as:

- 1 to whom is the letter intended;
- 2 what is the status and profession of the person;
- 3 is the correspondent a man or a woman;
- 4 what is the degree of familiarity of the writer with the person addressed (*le destinataire*).

One way to make the genre, function and context apparent is to group the formula by categories, write a number of examples next to one another and have students work in pairs on different letters in various situations.

Degree of familiarity	None	A little	Persons you know well
Heading	Monsieur Madame Mademoiselle Monsieur le Directeur Madame la Ministre Maître	Cher Monsieur Chère Madame Chère Mademoiselle	Chère Brigitte Cher Michel
Body of the letter	1) J'ai l'honneur de vous adresser	Je vous prie de Pourriez-vous s'il vous plaît	Merci de ta lettre du Peux-tu me dire si
Varies according to function:	1) Je vous serais très reconnaissant de....	Je vous demande de bien vouloir	Merci de m'avoir écrit pour
Thanks, wishes, requests, announcements	1) Je vous serais obligé de... Je sollicite de votre part	Je vous serais reconnaissant(e) de J'ai le plaisir de ou J'ai le regret de Je suis heureux/euse de savoir	
Letter ending	1) Veuillez agréer, Monsieur, l'expression de... 1) Je vous prie de croire à ... 1) Je vous prie de bien vouloir agréer l'assurance de... Je vous adresse l'expression de... Choisir selon la fonction et le destinataire pour continuer 1) ma considération distinguée 1) mes salutations distinguées 2) mes sentiments les meilleurs 2) mes sentiments très cordiaux	Veuillez croire, chère madame à ... Soyez assuré, cher Monsieur, de... Choisir selon la fonction et le destinataire pour continuer: mes sentiments cordiaux mon très bon souvenir toute ma sympathie mon amitié	Cordialement Amicalement Amitiés (3) Je t'embrasse (3) A bientôt

Note: the numbers 1, 2, 3 correspond to the degree of formality. 1 is very formal.

Letter writing is an activity which often surprises students whose first language is English by its formality and the extent to which it is governed by strict rules.

Activity 4: The meaning of "bread" in French and Australian cultures: beginners to intermediate levels

Another way of highlighting culture in language is to choose the every day environment (Zarate 1986:139). One of the examples given in the book mentioned above is that of the word cheese in a class of beginners composed of Dutch students. The aim is to alert the students to the fact that the same word does not necessarily correspond to the same reality in different countries as well as encourage students to see their own practices as part of a wider social context. The idea that "*les implicites culturels du contexte maternel ne sont pas forcément exportables*" (What is taken for granted in one's culture does not necessarily have an equivalent in another) (Zarate 1986:138) can lead to lively discussions, especially if an alternative to the illustrations of the textbook (usually a couple of photos) is seen as desirable.

While cheese is a highly appropriate choice to trigger rich associations in Dutch and French cultures, replacing cheese with bread seemed a better choice in an Australian classroom. The exercise consisted first in discussing a wide variety of images of bread as well as encouraging students who had been to France to recall their experience of buying and eating bread in the country. This was followed by asking all students to work in pairs and tell each other what type of bread they liked eating. The exercise showed that the most commonly eaten bread in Australia, the white loaf, a rectangular white bread, or even its equivalent the "high top" bread, still to be found in many country towns, have no French counterparts. It is light, soft and difficult to cut when fresh and found already sliced in all supermarkets, whereas most breads in France have a hard crust and a dough with air bubbles. The word bread conveys different realities. The appearance and taste are different. While the white bread can be replaced in its plastic bag and placed in the fridge for extra keeping, a "*baguette*" or a "*batard*" does not last more than a day.

The words "*pain*" and "bread" were then written on the board, each in the centre of a circle. All the associations including the times of the day evoked by each word were placed around the circumference. If some of the students in the class have been to France, as was the case when this exercise was done in class, their assistance in the task means that the graphic will not rely solely on the lecturer's view of the subject and will make the differences between eating habits, within the same family and amongst different ones, obvious.

The word "*pain*" and its cultural associations in a French context: some of the most common words associated with "*pain*":

Beurre (butter), *confiture* (jam), *déjeuner* (breakfast), *casse-croûte* (light meal), *chocolat* (chocolate), *goûter* (4.30 pm after school snack), *fromage* (cheese), *repas* (meals) *boulangerie* (bakery).

The words "*goûter*", "*pain et chocolat*" (bread and chocolate at 4.30 pm) as well as "*pain au chocolat*", "*boulangerie*" and "*casse-croûte*" led the class to discussions about taste — "*pain et chocolat*" versus bread and Vegemite. This in turn led to a review of the organisation of the school day and the importance of the three-course

midday meal in the school's "cantine" in France. We went on with a comparison of "le restaurant universitaire" with the various eating places on campus and talked about the breaks at work, "la pause-café" versus the tea-break. We continued with the nature of light meals "le casse-croûte" versus a snack, and finally, on the word "boulangerie" the class entered a discussion on the perceived Frenchness or lack of it of the shops calling themselves "boulangerie" in the big commercial centres of the town. The associations made with the word "bread" led to a reflection on the significance of the shops called "delicatessen" in Australian towns.

Another way of treating the subject of the time and the manner of eating bread is to have students make a table with two entries, one entitled "occasions", another entitled "ways of eating bread" and compare results. This exercise, in spite of its apparent simplicity not only gives a good insight into everyday habits and taste but also of the variations and differences according to the individuals.

The exercise with cheese from which the activity described above is inspired suggests examining whether there are equivalents in the other culture of the words associated with bread (in our case). While most words such as: "couteau à pain" bread knife, "panier à pain" bread basket, "planche à pain" bread board, "pain blanc bis et noir" white, black, brown bread have equivalents, some, like "pain de campagne" which is sometimes sold by weight or the various names of long bread "pain long" such as "flûte", "baguette", "parisien", "batard", "ficelle" or even the varieties of round bread "pain rond" such as "boule", "miche" or "couronne", don't. On the other hand, in most big towns in Australia one can ask for Italian bread, such a request has no equivalent in France and of course signifies the place of migrants and their impact on Anglo-Celtic society.

It is also of benefit to the students to add the words frequently associated with bread (co-ocurents) and the possible substitutes of the word (*correlés*) when teaching vocabulary (Galisson 1991). Here are some examples of words often found next to *pain*:

"Pain rassis, pain frais, pain grillé, pain bien cuit, quignon de pain, couper le pain en tranches, pain béni", or of words used as substitute such as "gagner sa croûte" for "gagner son pain".

From there on, it is fun to look at a variety of common expressions with bread and link them to specific situations:

Words such as "manger un morceau, étaler du beurre sur son pain" or "tartiner, tartine" are part of the vocabulary of millions of people at meal or snack time, while expressions such as the following are common:

"Etre au pain sec" (*sans accompagnement, punition*) — to put somebody on dry bread;

"Ne pas manger de ce pain là" (*ne pas accepter quelque chose*) — refuse to do something;

"Avoir du pain sur la planche" (*avoir beaucoup de travail*) — to have a lot of work to do;

"Pour une bouchée de pain" (pour un prix dérisoire) — to sell something for nothing;

"Se vendre comme des petits pains" (facilement) — about a product which will sell easily;

"Retirer à quelqu'un le pain de la bouche" (le priver de sa subsistance) — to take the bread out of somebody's mouth;

"Long comme un jour sans pain" (interminable).

All these expressions underline the act of eating bread as a meaningful way of commenting on social activities and interactions. Students found it interesting to contrast the use of the word bread in French expressions with English ones. The Concise Oxford dictionary (76) gives *Bread winner*; *Breadline* (queue of poor people waiting to receive food); *Bread and butter letter* (of thanks for hospitality); *Bread and circuses*; *Bread buttered on both sides* (easy prosperity); *know which side one's bread is buttered* (where one's advantage lies). Whereas the majority of the associations of words in the French expressions equates bread with work and the value of exchanges, most of the English sayings serve to comment on social behaviour.

Furthermore, the advertising for the cheese *Le boursin* which reads "du pain, du vin, du boursin" was successful, it could be argued, not only because of its simplicity, rhyme and rhythm but also because it rang true to practise for so many people in a country of wine and cheese as to acquire an essentialist quality.

Activity 5: Internet script, genre and modes of oral interaction: Advanced level

It has often be said that French people interrupt each other often in discussions, raise their voice and love arguing with each other. The document selected for work in an oral class with advanced students was downloaded from the Internet site of the public television station Antenne 2. Although this is an "authentic document", it is also an extreme example, not to say a caricature, of a discussion with constant levels of interruption and interpellation. It was presented as such and was chosen for this reason. The aim was to have students re-enact a heated debate. It is a debate staged in the studio of channel 2 between politicians and well known figures such as the lawyer Gisèle Halimi on the question of parity, that is the number of women in political parties and public institutions. By the end of the program the interviewer had difficulties even placing a word and constantly required order from the other participants who took no notice of her. Furthermore it became gradually apparent from reading the script that some of the participants were not talking together as the genre of televised debate requires, at least to some degree. Since the speakers other than the lawyer Gisèle Halimi were chosen to present the point of view of their parties on the subject, one could assume that the purpose was to inform the audience of the different perspectives, however, in this instance, some participants were putting forward a point of view in such a manner at times as not to let the other participants speak. Eventually one of the participants became incensed and resorted to insults.

The role of each participant in the televised debate had to be shared between two students because of the length of the script. Each person had to read the 22 pages of script outside of class. After a brief discussion on the political parties represented, the students sat in a circle and had to use the script to play their role. The script is such that, in re-enacting the debate, even the most shy of students had no other choice than to follow their part, interrupt others and adopt the right intonation. As a result the class enjoyed a degree of animation rarely achieved before while also experiencing first hand interrupting and being interrupted without losing the thread of the discussion or retreating into shocked silence.

Activity 6: Essay writing on culture in French: Advanced level

At advanced level, when students have to write essays involving knowledge of some aspects of French culture, the challenge is to make apparent ways of looking at the subject which can give an insight into the culture, as well as, by analogy, into one's own culture, without relying on a comparison between the two. This in order to give the means to arrive at a finer appreciation and not so much to teach how to write an essay like a French person. If most teachers see it as common practice to clarify expectations one has of essay writing and advise the students not only on questions of content but also on what is expected of them, to provide guidance on how to research and write about another culture while allowing students to assess differences and similarities between the culture they study and their own is not so easy to achieve. The following is an example of a non prescriptive model put together in answer to students' request for a possible answer to a subject given in a six-week course of two hours a week on French culture(s) and society.

This amount of time was seen as necessary to allow three stages in the work with the students, one which would consist in a series of presentations by the lecturer followed each week by a tutorial where students would take over the discussions. The last stage was the writing of the essay.

In choosing a museum or an institution of national importance as a subject of inquiry, the objective was twofold. It was first to block the reflex of going to look for magazines and books in order to retrieve a description which one would later illustrate, the easiest thing to do when one has to concentrate on writing in a foreign language. It was also to challenge a not so uncommon perception of culture as being a list of famous national monuments or of being about unavoidable trips to museums with the family, especially when abroad.

The students were asked to write the essay after a series of lectures and tutorials on the meaning and place of cultural heritage from 1789 to the present in France, culminating with a two hours presentation contrasting various museums according to the time in which they were built and the public debates during and after their constructions. The course served as a preparation for the discussions to take place in the tutorials on the importance given to cultural heritage in both countries.

In the tutorials, after a brainstorming session on the perception of the word

culture, the first step was to discuss several definitions of culture in dictionaries, looking at the evolution of the concept from the eighteenth century to the 21st and discussing various meanings of culture such as "popular" and "high culture", with examples in both countries, including perceptions of Aboriginal Australia. Working on both countries is essential to avoid remarks of the kind that the culture of White Australia is not as old as many European cultures and therefore that there is not much to say about it. It leads the students to reflect on their understanding of history and decide on the terms for a comparison or contrast between the two cultures or even whether the subject has to be seen from a different perspective in each country. For example, what would the Australian equivalent of the French ministry of culture be, if as the students decided it was, it is the Australian Council, what do the history of the two bodies tell us about the meaning and importance of cultural practices in the two countries, about the role of the state or of individuals in promoting culture? Or on a related subject, what do the problems which beset the construction of the Opera House in Sydney and the Musée d'Orsay in Paris tell us about the time in which they were built?

A second look at what is taken for granted or never consciously analysed, leads participants to take an active part in the discussions, thus helping to prepare for the essay not in terms of a comparison between equivalent terms but more in terms of a specific history.

This was the subject:

'Les questions que soulèvent la construction d'un musée, d'un bâtiment public ou la création d'un parc national ont souvent trait à l'image qu'un pays veut donner de lui-même à un moment précis de son histoire.

Cherchez le site du département sur Internet: <http://arts.anu.edu.au/languages/mel/programs/french/index.html>

"Courses with specific online information" Orsay.

Vous trouverez là une présentation du musée d'Orsay selon 6 perspectives différentes. Choisissez un établissement culturel français ou australien et présentez-le en tenant compte d'au moins 2 de ces perspectives que vous adapterez au sujet choisi.

En introduction, dites pourquoi vous pensez que les deux perspectives que vous choisissez sont celles qui vous paraissent convenir le mieux à l'établissement dont vous parlez.

The debates surrounding the construction of a museum, a public institution or the creation of a park have a lot to do with the way a culture sees itself at the time.

Go to <http://arts.anu.edu.au/languages/mel/programs/french/Orsay/index.html>

"Courses with specific online information" Orsay. Choose at least two out of the 6 perspectives given on the museum to write about an Australian or French museum of your choice. Before you start, justify your choice of perspectives in relation to your subject.

For the first two years of the course, where I had not realised the need for an example of an essay which would reflect the debate taking place in the tutorials, a great number of students still experienced difficulties in writing anything other than a description of a French or an Australian institution centred on a chronological description of the construction of the building with the names of the architects. Giving them the task to include at least two perspectives on the subject out of a choice of six, asking them to justify their choice of illustrations meant that finding a resume in an encyclopaedia was no longer sufficient and the content became more challenging. Six perspectives are given in the online "model" about Orsay.

These are:

- 1 historical context for the decision to build the museum;
- 2 difficulties in the realisation of the museum;
- 3 political pressures and influences in the realisation;
- 4 ways in which such a museum represents a rereading of the past;
- 5 what is left unsaid in the choices made for the collections of works and their presentation;
- 6 paintings are not just pretty pictures.

The choice of entry into the subject enabled students to show their own interest in the subject, construct an argument to justify their choices and establish a link between at least two different perspectives.

The questions asked to the lecturer in office hours shifted from:

"I can't think of anything to say"

to

"I would like to say this, how am I going to put it together?"

Where an Australian institution was chosen, the emphasis of the discussions shifted from topics such as "culture in white Australia is not as old as in France" to when, where, and why was this park created or this institution built, in answer to what needs and for what reasons. Here teaching culture in the language class is not so much a question of comparing and evaluating the norms of communication of two cultures but rather to encourage a more complex appreciation of elements of the two cultures in order to give/sharpen critical tools for understanding and enjoyment.

Conclusion

This chapter is informed by a desire to give teachers of French some insights into the more implicit features of French culture as well as to share examples of classroom activities with an emphasis on culture. It is meant to inspire rather than give recipes. It is up to teachers to develop their own activities and to further reflect on how culture can be taught successfully in language classes. We hope the chapter is of interest to teachers of other languages and to those who are interested in cross-cultural perspectives in general.

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7 Are Germans rude or just doing things differently? Understanding and teaching language and culture

Winfried Thielmann

Introduction

This is a preliminary study based on my teaching experience. I hope it will stimulate further discussion of culturally determined aspects of language in general and German in particular.

Culture is how we do things. Reflections on how we do things occur when we are confronted with people who do things differently. Our proceedings, including how we do things with words, form a complex system. One thing triggers another, and it is difficult to consider certain features in isolation. The fact that German has a grammaticalised polite form, for instance, has an enormous impact on the German idea of politeness and, consequently, on how Germans might be perceived by strangers visiting their country or on how they come across when they visit a country as strangers. I shall therefore attempt to unfold features of German I consider to be of intercultural relevance in their *interdependence*: as a *system of choices* people have made.

I shall start with aspects of spoken German, such as politeness and discourse structure and then describe some elements of the written language. Afterwards, I will provide some examples of how I have tried to teach these things. Finally, I will supply a conclusion. As intercultural reflections need a reference point, I try to relate my observations to Australian culture or, to be more precise, to Australian culture as I perceive it, being in a kind of *third place* myself.

Culturally determined aspects of spoken German

Verbosity or the importance of silence

One of the first things that one notices when one is confronted with a different culture is how much people speak. Do they speak all the time? Are they mostly silent? As far as Germans are concerned, these questions can not be answered in general. Consider:

"Na, dann will ich Ihnen mal was sagen. Wenn Sie Ihren famosen Voralpenkurort schon ausschreiben, wissen Sie, wenn Sie schon das Geld für Inserate ausgeben, dann können Sie sich auch den Luxus gestatten und 'n Hoteldiener auf die Bahn schicken, nich wahr? (...) Diesen Mindestgrad von Kultur müssen Sie sich hier ooch noch leisten, verstehen Sie, oder lotsen Sie die Leute nich her in Ihre Schwindelalpen und schicken Sie ganz einfach 'n Wagen an die Bahn. Das wollte ich Ihnen zunächst mal sagen, verehrter Herr!"

Die Wirkung auf den Posthalter war sehr stark. Zuerst schaute er harmlos und interessiert dem Herren auf den Mund und bewunderte ihn, daß er die Worte so schnell hintereinander ausstoßen konnte, aber allmählich zog er den Kopfein und schielte verlegen zum Martl hinüber, der mit weit aufgerissenen Augen den Vorgang beobachtete, und dann nahm der Blenninger die Mütze ab, kratzte sich hinter den Ohren und sagte, als Schnaase fertig war: "Ja...ja und nacha wollen 'S wahrscheinli dableib'n?"

(Thoma 1953)

("Well, let me tell you something. When you advertise your fancy 'Lower Alps Health Resort', you know, when you spend all that money on the ads, then you may also afford the luxury of sending someone to the railway station to help with the luggage, may you not? (...) You must be able to afford this minimum degree of culture, you know, or don't lure people into your swindle-Alps. Most importantly, however, just send a carriage to the railway station. That's what I wanted to tell you, dear Sir, in the first place!" — The effect on the innkeeper was very strong. Initially, he was studying — harmlessly and fascinatedly — the gentleman's mouth and admiring him for being able to expel words in such rapid succession, but then he slowly pulled in his head and squinted embarrassedly at Martl who had been watching the proceedings with wide open eyes. Finally, innkeeper Blenninger took off his cap, scratched himself behind the ears and said when Schnaase had finished: "Well ... um ... and, after all that, you're even going to stay here, aren't you?")

The circumstances described in Thoma's novel are almost a century old, but they are still saturated with authenticity. Germans' first true intercultural experience is travelling in Germany, as poor and utterly neglected Mr Schnaase from Berlin has to find out, whose monologue I have had to shorten considerably. The Bavarian

countryside of the Lower Alps region, after all, not only confronts him with a detrimental lack of Alps and service, but also with an utter lack of verballity.

Germany's extreme regionalism is the result of a history of division into states, each the size of a medium Australian beach towel, a state of affairs that ended only 130 years ago. Hence the obvious city-country differences are compounded by regional differences to a degree that German verbosity can only be commented upon in very general terms. These general terms are those Germans live by when they attempt to come to terms with Germans from other regions: people from the North tend to be more quiet than people from the South, people from Berlin and people from the Rhine may be a little more loquacious than other Germans, etc. (Clyne 1995:126-127).

Politeness

I shall restrict my remarks on politeness to three aspects: the grammaticalised polite form *Sie*, the structure of requests, and certain pragmatic aspects of greetings.

Sie and du

As Harald Weinrich puts it in his delightful essay on politeness in German (1986:24), politeness is "linguistic or non-linguistic behaviour that belongs to normal human intercourse. Its purpose is to bring forth the virtues of another person or to spare the other person in case he or she does not want to excel." From there he derives as the first maxim of politeness: "no one is devoid of any excellence". Allowing people to excel or sparing those who do not has a prerequisite: *space*. People require space in order to shine, they also need space in case they do not want to shine. This notion of "space" is, I believe, compatible with the concept of "negative face" unfolded in Brown and Levinson (1987, 62): "the want of every 'competent adult member' that his actions be unimpeded by others".

The major space-giving device of the German language is the polite form *Sie*. How does it work? Consider the German 'personal pronouns':

Singular	Plural
ich (I)	wir (we)
du (you)	ihr (you)
er (he)	
sie (she)	sie/Sie (they)
es (it)	

The expressions *ich* and *du* are pointers or *deictic* expressions (Bühler 1982, Ehlich 1979, Ehlich 1982b). With *ich* the speaker points at himself, thus making the listener focus his attention on him. With *du*, the speaker points at the listener, assigning the listener role to him. A similar thing occurs in the plural: using the expression *wir* the speaker points at the group he is part of, making the listener focus his attention on the group. *Ihr* points at a group of listeners, hence it is a kind of time saver for a laborious "*du, du, du... und du*".

The expressions *er*, *sie*, *es* (singular) and *sie* (plural) have a totally different function. Using these expressions, the speaker tells the listener that he can *maintain an established focus* (Ehlich 1979, 1982). The speaker mentions the topic once or twice, then advises the listener by using an expression from the *er/sie/es*-class that the topic is still current:

Gestern habe ich Peter (=topic) gesehen. Er ist umgezogen. Er wohnt jetzt in der Münchner Straße.

(Yesterday I saw Peter (=topic). He has moved. He now lives in Münchner Straße.)

The expression *er* (he) carries the topic. It orientates the listener by making it clear to him that he can add the new information conveyed to him to the topic he is already focused on. Because of their function as topic carriers, expressions of the *er/sie/es*-class are also called *phoric* (=‘carrying’) expressions (more about phoric expressions in the section on culturally determined aspect of written German).

In terms of politeness, addressing the listener with *du* is like pointing at him with one’s finger in order to assign the listener role to him. *Mit nacktem Finger auf angezogene Leute zeigen* (pointing at dressed people with a naked finger) is, as a space-giving measure, clearly a little counterproductive. Hence Germans tried to get out of this situation very early. In the middle ages, they employed the form *ihr* — addressing a single person as if he or she were a group of people, similar to the French *vous*. In their search for the ultimate space-giving device however, Germans — after a brief flirtation with *er* and *sie* (sing.) during the 17th and 18th century (Weinrich 1986) — arrived at the solution of using the plural *Sie* as the form of polite address (spelled with a capital in order to distinguish it from normal, phoric *sie*). The listener is addressed as if he were a group of people the speaker is referring to (“How are they?” — meaning *you*). This is indeed a very indirect way of addressing someone, giving the person the maximum amount of space.

As a general rule, *du/ihr* is employed within the family and between friends; *Sie* with any stranger(s) visibly above sixteen (=Year Ten, when teachers switch from *du* to *Sie* when addressing their students) and with anyone with whom one is not on *du*-terms. This last category seems to be the most complicated, especially since research suggests a major increase in the popularity of *du* (for instance Clyne (1995)). From an intercultural perspective, however, these difficulties are quite negligible, as — *Sie* being the standard — *du* requires to be formally established. (More about the pragmatics of *du* and *Sie* later).

Sie is generally used with *Herr/Frau* (“Mr/Ms”) and the surname. The form *Fräulein* (“Miss”) is not used any more. *Sie* on “first name basis” occurs in special situations, for instance when parents address the grown up school friends of their children. The academic titles *Doktor/Professor* are still part of the name: *Herr Doktor Müller/Frau Professor Maier*. If people feel uncomfortable being addressed with the title, they will say so.

Pragmatic and intercultural consequences of *Sie* — directness and the German notion of face

Employing the ultimate space-giving device (usually in conjunction with *Herr/Frau* + surname), *one is already polite in German. Sie* gives the listener space. Indeed, enough space. This means that everything that surrounds the *Sie* can be quite frank, as the initial quotation from Thoma may indicate. Schnaase from Berlin is quite up front with his criticism; Blenninger, the innkeeper, is not exactly obliging. Neither, however, is rude. (House/Kasper (1981) suggest that, from a British perspective, Germans tend to be more direct.)

The following authentic example from a German trial may give further evidence of this frankness — a frankness that cannot be completely explained by the fact that Germany has an investigative legal system:

- 1 R: Sie ham s doch gemacht!
- 2 A: Ja, weil ich total besoffen
- 3 A: war
- 4 R: Naanee, das kann man nicht als Volltrunke-
- 5 R: ner [...] Sie wußten genau, was sie taten. Sie sind
- 6 R: nämlich von der G. aus zu Fuß oder irgendwie zur
- 7 R: N.-Straße, was wollten Sie denn da? Doch klauen! Al-
- 8 R: so hatten Se n Plan!

(R= Richter; A=Angeklagter; Hoffmann 1980:44)

(Judge: You have done it, haven't you! — Accused: Yes, because I was totally pissed. — Judge: No way, one can't do that in a totally intoxicated state. You knew exactly what you were doing. You went — on foot or however — from G. to N.-Street. What did you want to do there? Nick something, didn't you? Hence you did have a plan!)

From an Australian perspective, I believe, the example above contains elements of quite surprising directness that could endanger at least the face of the accused (compare with "face-saving" Australian/British routine formulae employed when "testing" the witness, such as "I believe...", "I put it to you..."). Although Germans are quite capable of losing face (*das Gesicht verlieren*), they will not necessarily do so when their (speech-)actions are subject to scrutiny and criticism. The — sometimes a little behaviouristic — literature on intercultural phenomena has to my knowledge not yet sufficiently dealt with the fact that *Germans have a tendency to dissociate their (speech-)actions from their persona*. Not "I am what I say and do", but "I am what I am, and I say and do". Hence criticising a person's (speech-)actions does not automatically imply criticism of the person's persona. There is a certain cultural expectation "not to take everything personally" (*nicht alles persönlich zu nehmen*) and "not to play the insulted liver sausage" (*nicht die beleidigte Leberwurst zu spielen*). This is why Germans, in discussions, tend to voice their disagreement quite

directly, frequently employing the particle *doch* that operates upon the listener's system of presuppositions as a device that cancels negations (Graefen in prep.):

Das ist doch falsch! (That's wrong, don't you see that!)

This is also the place to mention linguistic behaviour prone to cause intercultural confusion: when Germans are asked questions, they frequently just volunteer the information requested. In the case of a yes/no-question, *ja/nein* can be, basically, full answers. When speaking English, Germans may therefore not give up such deeply ingrained habits immediately. I remember a German friend of mine, one of the politest people I know, answering a phone call from America made by the father of the guest student staying at my friend's house in Germany. On the German side, it sounded more or less like this:

- She's not here. (The father had identified himself and inquired if he could speak to his daughter)
- Yes. (The father had asked if he could leave a message.)
- (...)
- Bye.

Since English lost its thou/you-system very early, English politeness relies on different space-giving devices, such as register, indirect forms of requests (Would you please...?/Why don't you...?) and, last but not least, answering questions with full sentences (Yes, I do./No, I don't.). In Australia these matters are further complicated by the "relaxed" surface of daily intercourse that nevertheless is based on a very intricate politeness system. Just using the expression "mate" correctly can be quite a serious challenge. From a German point of view, this politeness system is not immediately evident and quite hard to work out, since Australians will not necessarily reveal that they have taken offence. Deprived of their ultimate space-giving device and unfamiliar with the subtleties of the Australian politeness system, Germans may indeed come across as quite rude, although it may not be necessarily their intention to offend anyone.

On the structure of German requests

Requests are quite complex speech actions. According to Redder (1984) the speaker will utter a request when he has formed an intention he can only realise with the listener's cooperation. Before he utters the request, the speaker assesses the listener's ability to perform the requested action. The listener, upon hearing the request, assesses his ability and decides whether he is prepared to make the speaker's will his own. If he makes both assessments in favour of the request, he will then resolve to perform the requested action. Below, I list the listener's decision-making steps in brief:

- 1 Can I do this?
- 2 Do I want to do this?

Resolution:

Yes, I will do this

or: No, I will not. (I cannot or I don't want to.)

In both German and English, requests usually involve modal verbs (can, will etc.). In employing a modal, the speaker refers to the steps of the listener's decision-making process (Brünner/Redder 1983) — thus giving the listener, in principle, the opportunity to deny the request *at the level of the decision-making process*.

In English, it is polite to question the *intention* in the subjunctive (Would you please...?). In terms of the little diagram above, "would you please...?" operates upon the listener's *resolution* (with the subjunctive as a space-giving device). The speaker has assessed the listener's ability to perform the requested action and also come to the conclusion that it is reasonable to expect the listener's cooperation — otherwise he would not utter the request at all.

In German, however, the situation is totally different. The standard request has to operate upon the listener's *can-decision*, inquiring whether the requested path of action is available to him or not — frequently with the subjunctive as a further space-giving device:

Könnten Sie das bitte tun? (Could you please do that?)

Hence the speaker is explicitly referring to the first step of the listener's decision-making process, giving him the possibility to deny the request on the basis of an ability assessment.

The German equivalent of "would you please...?" (*Würden Sie bitte...?*) questions the listener's resolution while abstracting from the decision-making process. This form can therefore only be used when the speaker requests an action he is, on principle, *entitled* to by being the listener's supervisor, paying client etc.

The surprising conclusion is that the — structurally very similar — forms *würden Sie bitte/would you please* have totally different positions in the politeness systems of the two cultures: *Would you please...?* is polite because the speaker signals that he has taken it upon himself to assess the listener's situation. *Würden Sie bitte...?* as a standard request is impolite in German because the speaker does not 'allow' the listener to assess the situation himself.

While the notions of space or "positive/negative face" (Brown/Levinson 1987) may indeed be applicable to most cultures, the "politeness" of a specific means of language depends on the tacit presuppositions within a specific culture.

Greetings

Greetings, as Weinrich puts it, are "declaration[s] of the principal willingness to converse" that give any conversation a "frame of politeness" (1986:10-11). Hence greetings are usually the very first thing taught in German language classes. In the — still popular — *Themen neu 1* textbook, the first two words students acquire are *Guten Tag*. Then they learn to vary the greeting according to the time of day — *Guten Abend*, *Guten Morgen*. They also learn that *Hallo* is informal and mainly used between people on *du*-terms. Unfortunately, almost every German textbook has initial dialogues like the following (quoted from *Themen neu 1*, 9):

- Ah, Herr König. Guten Morgen!

- + Guten Morgen, Herr Hoffmann. Wie geht es Ihnen?
- Es geht. Und Ihnen?
- + Danke, gut!

(O, Mr König. Good Morning! — Good Morning, Mr Hoffmann. How are you?

— Not bad. And you? — Very well, thank you.)

The problem is that textbooks include the phrase *wie geht es Ihnen?* (how are you?) in the greeting section, although it is not a greeting at all. It is a — potentially serious — inquiry. While an Australian on his death bed might still reply “very well, thank you” to “how are you?”, a German suffering from a headache might very well give an account of his condition when asked *wie geht es Ihnen?*. Being a potentially serious inquiry, *wie geht es Ihnen?* is only used between people who know each other well enough to be interested in one another’s well being. It is by no means a greeting ritual that can be employed between strangers.

Textbooks are also not very informative when it comes to the regional varieties of greetings and their pragmatic restrictions. While there might be some reference to the Bavarian *Grüß Gott* (instead of *Guten Tag*), I have not yet come across a textbook pointing out the pragmatic limitations of *Servus* and *Tschüs*. *Servus* is employed mostly amongst Bavarians instead of *Auf Wiedersehen* (good bye), but it is only used between people who are on du-terms. Bavarians on Sie-terms use *Auf Wiedersehen*. *Tschüs* is used in the North instead of *Auf Wiedersehen*. In the South, however, *Tschüs* is restricted to people who are on du-terms.

Thinking and speaking — aspects of German discourse structure

In pursuing goals with language, people have to say what they want, they have to justify what they want, they have to make themselves clear, inquire etc. All these different purposes determine the shape of discourse. Within a certain culture, these purposes get allocated certain places, they do not randomly float about — discourse assumes patterns based on mental conceptions of how we do things (Ehlich/Rehbein 1979, 1986). One of the most striking features of German discourse — from an Australian point of view — might be illustrated by the following example (taken from a lesson I taught on negotiation strategies):

- 1 A Die Sache ist also ganz einfach die sehen Sie wir haben also jetzt äh
- 2 A uns auch überlegt was was ... uns das kostet wenn wir jetzt äh die
- 3 A Rohlinge von dort beziehen
- 4 B ja
- 5 A und wir haben festgestellt die australische Firma ist sehr preiswert
- 6 B ja
- 7 A und äh die wird uns jetzt ein paar ähm Samples schicken und wir
- 8 B ja
- 9 A werden diese Samples analysieren. Und wenn die Qualität gut
- 10 A ist und der Preis so bleibt ... dann können wir uns das überlegen dann

- 11 A können wir zum Beispiel einen Vertrag machen. Die Sache ist nur die
 12 A der Vertrag ist für uns nur dann interessant wenn wir auch ... die
 13 A Gewähr haben in den australischen Markt reinzukommen.

(The thing is quite simply this you see we have um thought about what ... what it costs us when we now um obtain the raw product from there and we discovered the Australian company is quite good value for money and um they will send us um a few samples and we will analyse these samples. And when the quality is good and the price stays like this ... then we can think about it then we can make a contract for example. But the thing is the contract is only of interest to us when we also have... the guarantee to get into the Australian market.)

From an Australian perspective, I believe, this rather lengthy exercise would boil down to this:

For us one thing is most important: we need a guarantee of market access. The Australian company is quite good value for money and we'll test a few of their samples, but without a market access guarantee we can't form a contract.

Or take the following example, Chancellor Schröder's comment on the resignation of a minister threatened by corruption charges (transcribed from *Das Journal*):

- 1 Weil Herr Klimmt gesagt hat, er wolle sich selbst und der Partei
- 2 die Belastungen, die mit dem Gerichtsverfahren verbunden sind,
- 3 auch sicherlich die öffentliche Diskussion nicht zumuten
- 4 und er ist deshalb zurückgetreten
- 5 und ich finde, das muß man respektieren.

(Because Mr Klimmt said he did not want to subject the party to the burden associated with the trial and also certainly spare himself and the party the public discussion, and he has therefore resigned, and I believe one has to respect this.)

Wouldn't an Australian Prime Minister say something like this:

I respect the minister's decision, which was quite certainly influenced by his will to spare the party the burden associated with the trial.

One could get the impression that Schröder could have spared himself the burden of logical flaws, if he had started with the important bit first and observed the maxim: think first, then speak. The minister resigned because of corruption charges and the associated scandal, not because he *said* he did not want to subject the party to the burden of the trial.

On the surface, it looks as if Germans had a certain tendency to waffle, since the important bit occurs at the end. It looks as if they were totally ignoring the maxim: think first, then speak. Germans, however, do indeed *think as they speak*. They think aloud. *Thinking aloud, Germans think themselves through to what they want to say.* This is why the important bit occurs at the end. This is also why Schröder, then still

somewhat inexperienced in "leader speak", verbalised — to a certain extent — the real reasons for his minister's resignation.

By thinking aloud, Germans give their interlocutor the opportunity to follow their thought processes. The verbalised thought process *justifies* its goal, i.e. the speech action that finally evolves.

By verbalising their thought processes, Germans leave themselves open to listener reactions. Listeners trying to follow the thought process may need to satisfy their understanding and interrupt — for instance by asking questions with *denn*, thus indicating that they have a problem of understanding (Redder 1990).

German speech actions are *justified* by the verbalisation of the thought process and *understanding* of this thought process is negotiated between the interlocutors. These two aspects give German discourse its distinctly *hermeneutic* orientation, i.e. a shape that is not centred on pure exchange, but at the same time on the understanding of the exchange.

Culturally determined aspects of written German

The impact of *justifications* on the structure of German texts

I have attempted to show above how the verbalised thought process acts as a kind of *justification* for the speech action that eventually evolves, thus giving German *discourse* its — from an Australian perspective — "back to front" shape. In contrast to discourse, *texts* are linguistic units devoid of interaction (Ehlich 1979, 1982b). Hence their pragmatic constraints are quite different. In the following sub-sections, however, I shall demonstrate that *justification* is also a key feature of German texts across different genres.

Da — on German letter writing

The example below from Keseling (1988:221) allows us to study a little bit of German letter writing 'in action'. The transcription from which I took this section renders the monologue of a person writing a letter to his landlord about certain faults that need to be repaired. (Transcription code: **bold** = oral preformulation of text, underlined = written text, *italics* = reflection, normal = text passage read aloud)

Ähm...**ich bitte Sie die hier genannten Mängel. äh bis zum () beheben zu lassen oder zu beheben...Insbesondere...Ich bitte Sie...die genannten Mängel bis zum () 17.12.85 beheben zu lassen () ... Insbesondere..insbesondere () die Fenster sind uns wichtig () Nee, ich müßte da drohen das ist viel zu weich hier ((streicht "insbesondere"))** beheben zu lassen, **da...ich hab das ja eigentlich am Telefon erklärt dann schon warum beheben zu lassen Ich müßte jetzt also ne harte Formulierung / ne härtere Formulierung wählen Mietabzug Da ich sonst...irgendwie äh n Mietabzug machen werde / da ich sonst ((seufzt)) ...**

Keseling, G. (1988:221, Quoted from Redder 1990:205)

(Um...I ask you to get the faults mentioned here . repaired until () or to repair.... Especially...I ask you...to get the abovementioned faults repaired until () 17.12.85 () ... Especially.. especially () the windows are important to us () No, I should threaten them that's far too soft here ((crosses out "especially")) to get repaired as...but I have explained that on the phone why, haven't I get repaired I should use something hard/something harder reduction of the rent **As I shall otherwise...somehow um reduce the rent/as I shall otherwise** ((sighs)) ...)

The speaker is rephrasing a passage, thinking aloud. Unhappy with the result and reminding himself to "threaten" the landlord, he is attempting to locate in his mind a proposition that is *not subject to discussion* — this is where the first *da* is slipping in. We can follow how the speaker is holding on to *da*, trying to "grab" a proposition with it. Employing *da* with subclause structure, the speaker locates a proposition in his mind he will not deviate from, a proposition he regards as being part of the knowledge base he shares with the listener (Redder 1990:205-208). (English does not have a comparable linguistic device — *da* is usually translated with "as" or "since".)

This example shows how closely the final text of the letter is going to reflect the thought process that led up to it. Whatever final proposition the speaker will locate in his mind with the help of *da* — *it will enter the letter*.

Quite frequently, institutional letters start with an initial *da*. This procedure guarantees that writer and recipient achieve a "common textual knowledge" (Redder 1990:194-197). The letter's main theme unfolds from this shared knowledge base. The established common ground *justifies* the letter's main theme:

Universität..., Fachbereich 1

Der Hausherr

Betr.: Schließanlage des Gebäudes Dorfstraße

Sehr geehrte Damen und Herren!

Da bei einem Einbruch in das Gebäude Dorfstraße zwei Gruppenschlüssel entwendet wurden, müssen die Haustüren aus Sicherheitsgründen mit neuen Schlössern versehen werden. Aus diesem Grunde ist es bis auf weiteres nicht möglich, die Haustüren mit Ihrem Gruppenschlüssel zu schließen.

Mit freundlichen Grüßen

(Redder 1990:192)

(University...Department 1

The landlord

Re: Locks of the building Dorfstraße

Dear Sir/Madam,

As two master keys have been stolen during a burglary at the building Dorfstraße, the entrance doors have to be equipped with new locks for security reasons. For this reason it will be impossible — for the time being — to lock the doors with your master key.

Yours faithfully)

The entire letter flows from the indisputable fact that two master keys have been stolen from the Dorfstraße building. This fact *justifies* the next: the entrance doors will have to be equipped with new keys. The second fact provides the reason for the third: the resulting inconvenience.

Also German letter writing seems to follow the principle that the important bit comes at the end while the elements before act as justifications. In other words: to a certain degree, German letter writing follows the hermeneutic German discourse structure in that it renders the thought process that leads to the point the writer is going to make.

Newspaper commentaries

Given the observations above, it is not entirely surprising any more that German texts of argumentative nature will not just render the results of a thought process, but keep transparent, to a certain degree, the thought process that led to their creation. I have attempted to demonstrate (Thielmann 1999a,b) that the importance of *justification*-patterns for German discourse and texts might very well be the reason for some of the differences in the organisation of academic texts observed by Clyne (1987, 1991, 1993) and Clyne/Kreutz (1987). Here I shall limit myself to German newspaper commentaries.

Newspaper commentaries elaborate the writer's viewpoint. In English commentaries, it is customary to state the essence of the view at the beginning and then unfold the argumentation. As the following example shows, German commentary writing follows different principles:

Einstellung gegen Kohl? Verboten!

Der Paragraph 153a der Strafprozeßordnung ist eine beliebte Vorschrift: Unzählige Ermittlungsverfahren wegen Betrugs, Diebstahls, Untreue, Unterhaltungspflichtverletzung oder Straßenverkehrsgefährdung werden alljährlich nach dieser Vorschrift — also gegen Geldbuße oder Auflage — eingestellt, obwohl Tatverdacht gegen den Beschuldigten besteht. Warum sollte nicht auch der Altkanzler von dieser Vorschrift profitieren? Hat er nicht sogar Geld gesammelt, um den angerichteten Schaden wieder gut zu machen? Hat er also nicht durch sein Verhalten nach der Tat gezeigt, dass er die Milde des Gesetzes verdient? Eben nicht.

Das Verhalten Kohls schließt die Einstellung des Verfahrens derzeit strikt aus. Kohl verdient die Milde des Gesetzes nicht, solange er seine anonymen Geldgeber nicht benennt, also im Rechtsbruch verharrt. Kohl stellt sein angebliches Ehrenwort über das Gesetz. Solange er nicht sagt, wer ihn rechtswidrig finanziert hat, kann und darf nicht eingestellt werden, weil das "öffentliche Interesse an der Strafverfolgung" durch keine Geldbuße der Welt ausgeglichen werden kann. Der Schaden für die Rechtsordnung ist so erheblich und das Vertrauen in die Lauterkeit des Regierungshandelns so beeinträchtigt, dass die Schwere der Schuld einer Einstellung entgegensteht.

Kein Staatsanwalt kann das Verfahren gegen einen Täter einstellen, der seine Mittäter nicht nennt.

Es gibt also eine conditio sine qua non für eine Einstellung des Verfahrens: die Nennung der Finanziers. Wenn die Staatsanwaltschaft Bonn auf diese Bedingung verzichtet, dann ist das nicht ihre juristische Feigheit, sondern juristische Feigheit vor der Politik. (Süddeutsche Zeitung, 24.07.2000)

(Quash proceedings against Kohl? Forbidden!

Paragraph 153a of Criminal Law Proceedings is a popular regulation: Innumerable proceedings — because of fraud, theft, embezzlement, child maintenance default or reckless driving — are stopped every year according to this regulation — i.e. stopped in return for community service or payment of a fine — although there is enough evidence. Why shouldn't the former Chancellor profit from this nice regulation as well? Has he not even collected money in order to make up for the damage done? Has he not shown through his behaviour after the deed that he deserves the law's leniency? No, he has not.

Kohl's current behaviour does not justify any stopping of proceedings. Kohl does not deserve the leniency of the law as long as he does not name his anonymous sponsors, as long as he continues acting unlawfully. Kohl places his so-called word of honour above the law. As long as he does not say who financed him unlawfully, procedures cannot and must not be stopped, since "the public interest of prosecution" can not be compensated by any fine in the world. The damage to the legal order is so massive and trust in the honesty of government has been affected to a degree that the weight of the guilt excludes stopping of proceedings. No prosecutor can stop proceedings against an offender who does not name his accomplices.

Hence, there is a *conditio sine qua non* for the stopping of proceedings: the naming of the sponsors. If the prosecution in Bonn renounces that condition, it won't only be a case of legal cowardice, but also of legal cowardice taking its place before politics.)

What point is the writer making? Is he saying that people get off because paragraph 153a is being applied although there is enough evidence to convict them? Is he stating that Kohl does not deserve leniency? From a German point of view, the important statement occurs in the last paragraph: applying regulation 153a to Kohl's case would mean the capitulation of law before politics. The argument is evolving in the following way:

- 1 Paragraph 153a is frequently applied to rueful offenders
- 2 Kohl does not deserve the application of 153a, because by not naming his sponsors he acts unlawfully
- 3 Applying 153a to Kohl while he is acting unlawfully would mean the capitulation of law before politics.

German newspaper commentaries frequently work towards a principle. The writer assesses and weighs elements of knowledge and finally measures the state of affairs against a principle that is often derived from the constitution (*Grundgesetz*): that the law should not capitulate before politics is a direct consequence of the principle of the separation of powers laid out in Article 20 of the *Grundgesetz*.

One might also observe that the three paragraphs of this commentary are somewhat "tail-heavy", i.e. each paragraph leads up to the *final* statement. Frequently, these final sentences render the argument in a nutshell:

- 1 Has he (=Kohl) not shown through his behaviour after the deed that he deserves the law's leniency? No, he has not.
- 2 No prosecutor can stop proceedings against an offender who does not name his accomplices.
- 3 If the prosecution in Bonn renounces that condition (i.e. that Kohl names his sponsors), it won't be their legal cowardice, but legal cowardice before politics.

In terms of *justification*, we observe a very intricate structure: each paragraph *justifies* its final statement. Furthermore, all of the preceding paragraphs *justify* the final statement of the last one. Hence German newspaper commentaries render a thought process as well. Commentaries 'think themselves through' towards the principles in which they culminate.

When I attempted to show that the last sentences of the paragraphs give the argument of the commentary in a nutshell, I had to lexicalise two references ("Kohl" and "that Kohl names his sponsors") in order to render these sentences unequivocally. As the "tails" flow from the "heads", the "tails" contain elements of knowledge unfolded before. These elements are still part of the reader's textual knowledge. Hence they are not spelled out completely, but they are *referred to*. The "tail-heavy" structure of German texts makes ample use of the *reference system*.

"Tail-heavy" structures and the German reference system

In the following, I would like to point out some peculiarities of the German reference system that German texts make ample use of. Since I have talked so much about certain genres embodying thought processes, I might start with an example of "sheer" thought — the initial reflections of Heidegger's "Putting technology into question" (1991) (*Die Frage nach der Technik*):

*Im folgenden fragen wir nach der Technik. Das Fragen baut an einem Weg. Darum ist es ratsam, vor allem auf den Weg zu achten und nicht an einzelnen Sätzen und Titeln hängen-zubleiben. Der Weg ist ein Weg des Denkens. Alle Denkwege führen, mehr oder weniger vernehmbar, auf eine ungewöhnliche Weise durch die Sprache. Wir fragen nach der Technik und möchten dadurch eine freie Beziehung zu **ihr** vorbereiten. Frei ist die Beziehung, wenn **sie** unser Dasein dem Wesen der Technik öffnet. Entsprechen wir **diesem**, dann vermögen wir es, das Technische in **seiner** Begrenzung zu erfahren. (ibid., 5; words marked in bold by W.T.)*

(In the following we are going to put technology *into question*. Questioning is going to build a path. Hence it is advisable to pay attention to the path and not to stop at single sentences and titles. This path is a path of thought. All paths of thought lead — more or less perceptibly and in an unusual way — through language. We are putting *technology* into question, and in doing so we would like to prepare a free relationship towards **it (=technology)**. This relationship will be free when **it** opens up our existence to the essence of technology. If we correspond to **this (=essence of technology)**, then we will be able to experience the technical as such in **its** limitation (**=the limitation of the technical as such**).)

Once again the important bit occurs at the end, and it is not surprising that the reference markers (in bold) start creeping in when a bit of textual knowledge has been built up. The main reason the English translation reads so clumsily is that I purposely used the English reference system where I should have laid out the sentences in a different way. One can see quite clearly that the German reference system works differently.

I am going to look at the basic referential expressions available in German and English, in order to determine how the reference system works. (I include the case distinctions, using the term "objective case" for both the English direct and indirect object markers, as the English indirect object frequently requires the preposition "to". The abbreviation "poss." stands for the possessive article.)

Table 1 shows the reference carriers, the phoric expressions that advise the listener that he can maintain his focus on a previously established topic.

Table 1: reference carriers (phoric expressions)

	M	F	N	PL.		M	F	N	PL.
Nom.	er	sie	es	sie	Nom.	he	she	it	they
Acc.	ihn	sie	es	sie	Obj.	him	her	it	them
Dat.	ihm	ihr	ihm	ihnen	Obj.	him	her	it	them
Poss.	sein	ihr	sein	ihr	Poss.	his	her	its	their

Tables 2 and 3 show the pointers (deictic expressions) the speaker employs to make the listener focus his attention on something.

Table 2: pointers (deictic expressions)

	M	F	N	PL		M	F	N	PL
Nqm.	der	die	das	die	Nom.	he	she	it/this	they/these
Acc.	den	die	das	die	Obj.	him	her	it/this	them/these
Dat.	dem	der	dem	denen	Obj.	him	her	it/this	them/these
Poss.	dessen	deren	dessen	deren	Poss	his	her	its/of this	their/of these

Table 3: deictic article words

	M	F	N	PL		M	F	N	PL
Nom.	dieser	diese	dieses	diese	Nom.		this		these
Acc.	diesen	diese	dieses	diese	Obj.		this		these
Dat.	diesem	dieser	diesem	diesen	Obj.		this		these
Poss.	dieses	dieser	dieses	dieser	Poss		of this		of these

The main differences between English and German seem to lie in the area of pointers (deixis): when pointing at people, for example, one has to employ emphasised reference carriers in English where German has a system of its own:

Schau dir den an! (Look at *him!*)

Another obvious difference is that the English *this/these*-system does not differentiate gender and case.

What the tables don't show, of course, is that the German reference system relies on *grammatical gender*. To understand the impact of this, I give the last sentences of the Heidegger quotation above with gender references:

We are putting **technology (feminine, singular)** into question, and in doing so we would like to prepare a free relationship towards **her**. This **relationship (feminine, singular)** will be free when **she** opens up our existence to the **essence (neutral, singular)** of technology. If we correspond to **this (neutral, singular)**, then we will be able to experience **the technical as such (neutral, singular)** in its limitation.

It is clearly visible that the "tail-heavy" German structures rely on the reference system which, in turn, relies on grammatical gender.

Let us now cast a look at how deictic and phoric expressions are employed:

*Wir fragen nach der Technik und möchten dadurch eine freie Beziehung zu **ihr** vorbereiten. Frei ist die Beziehung, wenn **sie** unser Dasein dem Wesen der Technik öffnet. Entsprechen wir **diesem**, dann vermögen wir es, das Technische in **seiner** Begrenzung zu erfahren.*

(We are putting **technology** (feminine, singular) into question, and in doing so we would like to prepare a free relationship towards her. This **relationship** (feminine, singular) will be free when **she** opens up our existence to the **essence** (neutral, singular) of technology. If we correspond to **this** (neutral, singular), then we will be able to experience **the technical as such** (neutral, singular) in its limitation.)

In the first sentence, *Technik* (technology) is the theme or *topic*. Employing an expression of the *er/sie/es* (he/she/it) class, the writer advises the reader the topic "is still on", i.e. that he can maintain the focus he has established on the topic (Ehlich 1982b). A similar thing occurs in the second sentence: *Beziehung* (relationship) is the topic that, being feminine and singular, is continued with the expression *sie*.

The third sentence is different. It is not linked to the previous sentence by continuing the topic. It *shifts* the focus from the topic of the previous sentence to the *new information* the previous sentence conveyed: the *comment*. In detail:

Topic (= theme)	Comment (= new information)
Frei ist die Beziehung ,	wenn sie unser Dasein dem Wesen der Technik öffnet.
Entsprechen wir diesem ,	dann vermögen wir es, das Technische in seiner Begrenzung zu erfahren.
This relationship (feminine, singular) will be free	when she opens up our existence to the essence (neutral, singular) of technology.
If we correspond to this (neutral, singular),	then we will be able to experience the technical as such (neutral, singular) in its limitation.

Employing the deictic expression *diesem* (this), the writer advises the reader to shift his focus from the previous topic (*Beziehung*/relationship) to the previous comment (*Wesen*/essence). The reader, who has the topic of the previous sentence in his focus, must *re-focus his attention* (Ehlich 1979, 1982b). Using both deictic and phoric expressions the speaker/writer directs the focus of the reader/listener and thus guides his *understanding* (Ehlich 1979, 1982b).

Teaching language and culture

Advocating a change of perspective: language as a purpose-driven system

I shall now give a few examples of how I have tried to teach some of the culturally determined aspects of German described in the previous chapters. Before I embark on these descriptions however, I would like to make some general remarks about what — in my opinion — the challenge of teaching language *and* culture consists of.

Language is frequently seen as a rule-driven system, consisting of a lexicon (vocabulary) and a syntax — a set of rules according to which items of the lexicon are arranged in order to form sentences. It strikes me as somewhat odd that quite a few textbooks and grammars — especially those of American provenance — still adhere to this approach. If this were true, why do we teach languages at all and not leave matters of language to translation computers? After all, learning a language properly takes a considerable chunk of one's lifetime — time that could be invested in something else.

Languages have, however, defied computerisation successfully because they are not rule-driven. They are *purpose-driven* systems (Ehlich 1982a). For example, the absolute nuisance of grammatical gender in German — from a learner's perspective — becomes a linguistic *device* when one views it in conjunction with the reference system. Both gender and reference system, however, would be nuisances themselves if they were not employed to organise references to topic and comment and thus allowed for the hermeneutic shape of German texts and discourse — which is, in return, triggered by the requirements of a prominent linguistic action pattern: *justification*.

Another example for the purposes behind a rule is the accusative case, a linguistic device that shows up very early in most language courses. The rule is that the direct object is marked by the accusative case — if it happens to be masculine singular. The *fact* is that the accusative case would be a sheer nuisance if it were just there to delight grammarians. Let us cast a brief look at what the accusative does:

S	V	DO
Der Mann	schlägt	den Hund
S	V	DO
The man	hits	the dog

We observe that in German the phrase *der Hund* changes to *den Hund* because the direct object is marked by the accusative. So far, so good. Let us now consider the following example:

DO	V	S
Den Hund	schlägt	der Mann
S	V	DO
The man	hits	the dog

The meaning of the German sentence is neither "The dog hits the man" nor "The dog is hit by the man". The meaning of the German sentence is "The man hits the dog". The accusative case marks the direct object, which — thus identified — can also take the place before the verb without changing the meaning. In other words: in English, the direct object is marked by position: it is — usually — the bit after the verb. The linguistic device of word order is employed to indicate syntactic functions. In German, the syntactic function of constituents is indicated by case inflections — the linguistic device of word order is therefore free to take on a different task — topic-comment-organisation:

- Ist der neue Computer schon geliefert worden?
- + **Den** habe ich wieder zurückgeschickt. Die haben das falsche Modell geliefert.
- (- Have they already delivered the new computer?
- + I sent it back. They delivered the wrong model. (lit. "It I sent back.))

The topic of the question is *Computer*. The answer re-focuses this topic by employing the deictic expression (pointer) *der*. *Der* is both topic and direct object of the answer. Because of this, *der* appears before the verb and its syntactic function is indicated by the accusative case.

Because of this very intricate network of means and purposes it is, I believe, not possible to teach even "basic" structures in terms of "rules" alone. At some stage, the purposes have to be introduced, so that students can acquire an understanding of how the language works.

Similarly, I don't believe that it is possible to say that the linguistic action pattern of *justification* is a cultural thing while reference is something rule-driven that can be dealt with in the terms of generative grammar. I would rather propose the following view:

In doing things with words people make choices in societies as to which purposes to pursue with language. These purposes, such as giving space to others, requesting information, asserting facts etc., are not linguistic in nature, but are *language-external*. Pursuing these purposes with means of language, however, shapes the language inasmuch as that it is a system also concerned with itself, its own organisation. Those purposes that are concerned with the organisation of language itself are *language-internal* (Ehlich 1982a). There is strong interdependence and reciprocal interaction between language-external and language-internal purposes. The demands of feminist linguistics, for instance, have not been met in full by the German language community. Fulfilling the language-external purpose of equal gender representation by splitting the references endangered the reference system to a degree that texts became illegible.

Language teaching, in my view, is not just teaching the four key skills (speaking, listening, reading, writing) with some "cultural icing". Teaching a language means to attempt to pass on a society's conception of the world and how things are done as these are embodied in the language as a purpose-driven system.

The polite form *Sie*

When Germans live in Australia, they are easily seduced by the "relaxed" surface of daily intercourse. This may be the reason why I frequently observe that lecturers and teachers are on *du*-terms with their students. While I sympathise with the notion of being "at ease" with one's students, I feel that being on *du*-terms with them deprives them of the opportunity of properly acquiring the polite form. The paradigm of *Sie* is not exactly trivial:

Nom.	Sie
Acc.	Sie
Dat.	Ihnen
Poss.	Ihr

Also the syntax of the polite form has its intricacies: it demands the plural (in contrast to phoric *sie* in the singular) and it does not possess an imperative:

Gehen Sie? (rising intonation: Are you leaving?)

Gehen Sie! (falling intonation: Leave!)

This is why I believe that *Sie* should be used all the time with students above sixteen and that students below sixteen should employ the polite form when addressing the teacher.

Given that *Sie* comes as a complete novelty to the English native speaker, there is some necessity to make students aware of the almost physical pain a German native speaker feels when incorrectly addressed with *du*.

When teaching beginners, I walk through the class performing the common introduction routine:

Mein Name ist Winfried Thielmann. Wie heißen Sie?

(My name is Winfried Thielmann. What is your name?)

When students have listened for a while, they will reply *Mein Name ist...* I then shake hands with them and say *Guten Tag, Herr/Frau...* Having done this, I repeat the introduction routine in the *du*-form:

Mein Name ist Winfried. Wie heißt du?

When I get to the *du*, however, I point at every person by almost throwing my index finger at them. Depending on the class size, the air can be quite charged with bafflement. I then explain that the *du*-form is a kind of index-finger-equivalent that can only be employed with family and friends because no one else puts up with being pointed at.

It is vital, I believe, that the pragmatics of *du* und *Sie* are explained as early as possible. Students need to know that *Sie* is the standard and that *du* needs to be negotiated. Despite studies (for instance those quoted in Clyne 1995) suggesting a tendency towards *du*, there are only three "solidarity circles" within which people visibly below thirty will be readily addressed with *du*: university students ("student-*du*"), pubs whose main clientele is below thirty ("pub-*du*"), and the ecological scene

("green-du")(Weinrich 1986:21). It is, furthermore, very important to point out to students that *du*, once it has been agreed upon, cannot be reversed — a point essential for professionals working in Germany. Amongst Germans, a switch from *du* to *Sie* usually indicates that they have started to communicate through lawyers.

Teaching German discourse structure

Receptive listening

The frustration learners experience when trying to comprehend authentic material is frequently due to the speed of authentic speech and its lexical and syntactic complexity. The following section from a news item (*Das Journal*, 3/11/00), for instance, makes use of the past tense (*Präteritum*) and the passive voice — both traditional "second year" structures:

Während israelische Panzer das Westjordanland verlassen, explodierte in Jerusalem eine Autobombe. Bei dem Anschlag wurden zwei israelische Soldaten getötet und zwanzig Personen zum Teil schwer verletzt.

(While Israeli tanks are leaving West Jordan, a car bomb exploded in Jerusalem. As a consequence of this attack two Israeli soldiers were killed and twenty persons injured, some of them severely.)

This news item becomes — at least linguistically — much less frightening to learners when they know what to listen for. The application of the key-word-method may yield first results:

Jerusalem — Autobombe — zwei israelische Soldaten getötet — zwanzig Personen verletzt

(Jerusalem — car bomb — two Israeli Soldiers dead — twenty people injured)

Learners may, however, gather the key words more easily when they are aware of certain elements of German discourse structure. I have the feeling that my — quite linear — English translation of the news item above may not exactly correspond to the standards of English news reading, since the important points occur rather late in the sentences.

Indeed, also German news reading tends to follow, to a certain degree, the fundamental principle of German discourse, which is to make the point late. When one looks at the syntax of these sentences, one can put this even more strongly: German news reading uses every structural means available to shove the important information as close to the end of the sentence as possible:

Vorfeld (position before V1)	V 1 (first part of the verb)	Mittelfeld (position between V1 and V 2)	V 2 (second part of the verb)
Während israelische Panzer das Westjordanland verlassen,	explodierte	in Jerusalem eine Autobombe.	
Bei dem Anschlag	wurden	zwei israelische Soldaten	getötet
		und zwanzig Personen zum Teil schwer	verletzt

The first sentence starts with a subclause that links the news item to the listener's previous knowledge (while Israeli tanks are leaving West Jordan). Then it delivers the verb (exploded), then the place (Jerusalem) and, finally, the subject (a car bomb). The second sentence rephrases the new information (comment) of the previous sentence (as a consequence of this attack), then gives the passive voice indicator in the past tense (were) and finally delivers the subjects (two Israeli soldiers, twenty persons) with the respective action results (killed, injured).

The idea is, obviously, to make the new information "stick" because it is the last thing the listener hears. The position before V1 gives the listener the "topical" information, i.e. the knowledge the new information relates to.

When students are made aware of the topological structure of the German sentence and how its positions are used for the distribution of information, they realise very quickly that they can gather information effectively although their structural command of the language may be quite limited.

I recommend playing news items in class and transcribing them into the topological scheme above while explaining how the information is distributed. In fact, the discourse structure of German news telling is quite learner-friendly, since the first position serves as a kind of up-beat, allowing the listener to tune in without losing essential information.

Speaking and listening — teaching interaction

A notorious problem of the classroom situation is that it seems to be designed against any necessity to pursue purposes with language, especially with a foreign language. Fenced in by written and oral exams, assessments and restricted hours, one frequently tends to follow the *Sprechsanlässe* (speech stimulations) offered by the textbooks, trying to keep alive some discourse that — apart from the acquisition of a grammatical or lexical item — is as devoid of purpose as a headache.

I fondly remember those situations when even those students spoke whose mouths were usually locked by the vice of subject-verb agreement or worse. Once I prepared a group for the *Zertifikatsprüfung* (Certificate of German as a Foreign Language). After almost one year of the elaborate tediousness of *Themen III*, we finally had three sessions at our disposal that were not subject to any progression.

I designed a court case, a complex murder case, indeed. I played all the witnesses while small groups took on the roles of the judge (investigative system!), the defence and the prosecution. Playing a diverse range of witnesses, articulate ones, obstinate ones, cunning ones and dumb ones, I was interrogated mercilessly by everyone and time flew.

While role plays and scenarios (role plays with information gaps that allow for purpose-driven interaction, like the court case example) have their merits as speech stimulants, they frequently do not confront the learner with German-shaped discourse, as the learners interacting with each other reproduce the Australian discourse structure in the foreign language. To avoid this, the teacher may play one part of the scenario, for instance against a selected group of the class while the others are listening and supporting.

The example in the section, "Thinking and speaking — aspects of German discourse structure" is taken from a lesson I taught on negotiation strategies in a one-to-one situation, but I have also used this technique with small groups in the manner outlined above. The student's task was to promote Australian products in return for easier market access in Australia. I was playing a representative of a German company. The student did not know my agenda and hence had to react on the spot. The fact that the discussion was taped added to the pressure, so that the exercise became quite close to a real life situation.

The most important part of such a scenario is the assessment. Did the students feel in control throughout? Did they, at some stage, feel lost? Were they polite? Were they, at some stage, not pushing their agenda enough? And did they gain the result they wanted? During the assessment phase I play the tape and transcribe certain sections, including my own speech. I point out typical elements of German discourse structure and assess the adequacy of the students' reaction. Thus students do not only get a grammatical feedback, they also learn how well they would fare in a real life situation and how they can control the outcome of such a situation with the linguistic means they have. Another benefit of this method is that it forces the teacher to produce authentic speech and thus to come up with language that for some reason or another would not find its way into a German textbook.

Of course, such exercises require some preparation. To make this preparation most beneficial for the students, it is necessary to understand that the initial phase of the scenario is the one they are most worried about. It is then they have to breach the silence. It is then they have to come up with what they want. If they can't make themselves clear, they may totally lose control over the entire conversation.

Hence the first thing to be done is to work out with the students the initial proposal. The learners can prepare this as a homework, once the key vocabulary has been explained. In the next session the teacher assesses the text of the proposal from a *functional* perspective, i.e. the teacher points out those elements that would cause misunderstandings in a real life situation. It is important that the language of the proposal is not more advanced than that of the students. This is not about beauty, but about pursuing purposes with language, about getting things done. To

feel safe, students are allowed to use the text of their proposal during the exercise. It makes it easier for them to enter the discussion because they have initiated the conversation:

- 1 A (...) uns geht es um Marktzugang nach Deutschland
- 2 B mhm mhm
- 3 A seit zehn Jahren prz produzieren australische Firma Qualitätsrohlinge
- 4 A für die Linsenprodukschon. Diese Rohlinge sind preiswert und von
- 5 A höher Qualität aber bischer haben wir leider diese Rohlinge noch
- 6 A nicht nach Deutschland exportiert.
- 7 B aha!
- 8 A a können wirs ... sind an einer Firma interessiert, die unsere
- 9 A Rohlinge abnehmen könnte
- 10 B mhm
- 11 B ähem das sin also Sie sch Sie sagen Sie machen äh äh das habn
- 12 B das wissen wir gar nicht das haben wir noch gar nicht gewußt
- 13 B Sie machen in Australien Qualitätsrohlinge
- 14 A ja ja
- 15 B aha aha
- 16 A und a ja wir wir interessiert uns a für Marktzugang in Deutschland
- 17 B mhm mhm
- 18 A und als Gegenleistung werden wir bessere Marktzugangmöglichkeit
- 19 A für Ihre Produkte in Australia a Australien schaffen

(A: (...) we are interested in market access to Germany. For ten years Australian company produce quality raw product for lens production. These slugs are good value for money, but unfortunately we have not yet exported these slugs to Germany. Um can... we are interested in a company that could buy our slugs. B: Um these are you s you say you make um um we don't know that at all we haven't known that at all. You are producing quality slugs in Australia. A: And um yes we we are interested in market access in Germany and in return we will create better possibilities of market access for your products in Australia.)

From 1-9 the student (A) was relying on her notes. It is evident that the proposal is not grammatically perfect. It is, however, functionally adequate. From 10 onwards the student was without any support. By this stage in the course she was already used to the teacher's "hermeneutic stutter" (11 to 12) where — typical for German discourse — thinking and speaking coincide. Hence she had time to organise her own verbal planning effectively.

Teaching how to read German texts

How to gather the key information

As pointed out above, German texts of an argumentative nature follow, to a certain degree, the principle of making their point late. The writer verbalises his thought process which *justifies* the point. Australian students, who are used to a completely different way of organising texts, frequently get lost in longer German texts (i.e. texts whose organisation is not evident at first glance). The following textbook example of a German letter may serve to illustrate this point (*Themen neu 2*, 44):

An das

Rathaus der Stadt Trier

Amt für öffentliche Ordnung

Am Augustinerhof

54290 Trier

Sehr geehrte Damen und Herren,

vor meinem Käse-Spezialitäten-Geschäft in der Fußgängerzone machen fast jeden Tag junge Leute Musik. Ich habe nichts gegen Musik, aber manchmal kann ich meine Kunden kaum verstehen, weil die Musik so laut ist. Jetzt im Sommer ist es besonders schlimm. Meine Frau und ich müssen uns von morgens bis abends die gleichen Lieder anhören. (...)

Kann die Stadt nicht endlich etwas gegen diesen Musikterror tun? Ich habe über dieses Problem schon mit vielen anderen Geschäftsleuten in der Fußgängerzone gesprochen. Sie sind alle meiner Meinung: Die Stadt muß etwas tun!

Ich bitte Sie deshalb dringend:

Verbieten Sie die Straßenmusik in der Fußgängerzone

Mit freundlichen Grüßen

(To the City Council of Trier, Office of Public Order etc.

Dear Sir/Madam,

Every day young people are making music in front of my fine-cheese-shop situated in the pedestrian area. I have nothing against music, but sometimes I can hardly understand my clients because the music is so loud. In summer this is especially bad. For the entire day my wife and I have to listen to the same songs over and over again. (...)

Why can't the city council do something against this musical terror? I have spoken to many people who have businesses in the pedestrian area. They are all of the same opinion: The city council has to do something! Hence I beseech you: Ban street music in the pedestrian area!

Yours faithfully)

From an Australian perspective this text is, I believe, a little challenging since the writer is making his point in the last line. These difficulties may be slightly compounded by the fact that the passage I had to leave out for the sake of space contains 134 (one hundred and thirty four) words rendering the cheese shop owner's agony.

Students' agony can be eased considerably when they are advised that German letter writing follows the German discourse pattern in that it substantiates at length the point that is eventually going to evolve. If students read the first lines and the last paragraph they will have a pretty good idea what the letter is about, before they indulge in the lengthy justifications.

When students are still struggling with the language, knowledge of the structure of German text genres allows them to select information according to their Australian genre expectations.

Handling the reference system

Phoric and deictic expressions, topic and comment

Given the hermeneutic structure of German texts, command of the gender-run reference system is of vital importance for the understanding of German writing. If students fail to acquire gender and are unsure about the paradigms and functions of the reference system, they will not be able to make sense of texts that make use of these devices, which is the majority of texts. Teachers should insist that students learn words with their grammatical gender and plural forms. They should also give students ample opportunity to practise the reference system. Fortunately, modern textbooks include such exercises at an early stage:

Das ist eine BADENIA-Küchenlampe. Die Lampe hat eine 75-Watt-Glühbirne. Sie kostet DM 157,-. (Themen neu 1, 25)

(This is a BADENIA kitchen lamp (**feminine singular**). The lamp (**feminine singular**) has a 75 watts bulb (**feminine singular**). She (**feminine singular**) costs 157 marks.)

In the textbook, similar examples are offered for the other genders and the plural. The example above, however, imposes some difficulty, as both *Lampe* (lamp) and *Glühbirne* (light bulb) are feminine in German. How is it then possible that the phoric expression *sie* (she) refers to *Lampe* and not to *Glühbirne*?

Depending on the audience, I feel that the notions of topic and comment should be introduced as early as possible, since they are vital for the comprehension of the organisation of German texts. Initially this can be done in quite simple terms: the topic, the theme of the sentence, is the bit before the verb. The comment, the new information, is the bit after the verb. As long as focus and topic coincide, the phoric expressions *er/sie/es* are employed to advise the reader that the topic is still on. Hence in *Sie kostet DM 157,-* the *sie* can only refer to the established topic *Lampe*. If the writer wanted the reader to shift his focus from *Lampe* to *Glühbirne*, he would

have to employ the *deictic* expression *diese*:

Die Lampe hat eine 75-Watt-Glühbirne. Diese kostet DM157,-.

(The lamp has a 75 watts bulb. **This** (bulb) costs 157 marks.)

Reading selectively — chasing the reference

When students learn to read selectively, i.e. gathering key information on the basis of German genre knowledge, reference is of major importance. The following section from a German newspaper commentary on the compensation of forced labourers during World War II displays the hermeneutic structure described earlier. The essential sentence is the last one of the paragraph:

Wäre die bisherige Bilanz der "Stiftungsinitiative der deutschen Wirtschaft" ein Indiz für den Zustand der deutschen Wirtschaft insgesamt, dann müsste man auf der Stelle verzweifeln: Sie beherrscht das Lamentieren weit besser als das Organisieren. Sie ist auf überraschende Weise ineffizient. Sie verfügt über keine Autorität, über keine Persönlichkeit mit Vorbild stiftender Kraft. Sie ist nicht in der Lage, Zusagen einzuhalten. Sie versucht mit Tricks und Finessen, das Ergebnis ihrer bisherigen Bemühungen zu schönen.

(Süddeutsche Zeitung, 18.10.00)

(Were the current balance of the "Foundation-Initiative of German Industry" (=feminine singular) an indication for the overall state of the German economy, one would have to despair immediately: **She** (=the initiative) knows much better how to lament than how to organise. **She** is, in a surprising fashion, inefficient. **She** possesses no authority, no personality with the power to set an example. **She** is unable to keep agreements. **She** tries, with cunningness and trickery, to palliate the results of her hitherto efforts.)

Instructed to read the last sentence of the paragraph first, students discover that it contains the reference *sie*. In order to make sense of this sentence, the reference has to be lexicalised, i.e. the focus needs to be established. Because the reference is *phoric*, the focus must be on the topic of the previous sentence. Realising that the previous sentence also starts with *sie*, students have to 'chase the reference' until they arrive at a feminine singular noun in topic position.

When reading texts, such exercises in lexicalising the reference should be incorporated regularly. From there, writing exercises can be developed that encourage students to develop their arguments in a hermeneutic fashion by verbalising their thought processes.

Conclusion

I have attempted to show that language, as a purpose driven system, cannot really be divided into a "structural" and a "cultural" part. Hence language teaching must take seriously the fact that "cultural" purposes are pursued with "structural" devices and that linguistic solutions that fulfil a certain purpose may have an impact on other areas of the system.

Being an obligatory and structurally entrenched space-giving device, the German polite form *Sie* has the consequence that German discourse is somewhat more direct than its Australian counterpart.

The hermeneutic shape of German discourse, the tendency to verbalise the thought process as a *justification* of the final speech action, carries over into written genres such as texts of an argumentative nature. To make this work, writers need to orientate their readers by organising topic-comment-structures clearly and by advising readers when they can maintain an established focus or when they have to shift it. Hence the gender-run reference system is a device employed for an ultimately "cultural" purpose.

I hope that some of my reflections and descriptions of teaching methods may be beneficial to teachers of German and to those reading the present volume who are interested in cross-linguistic cultural comparison.

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8 Face value: teaching Italian verbal and social-cultural interaction

Piera Carroli, Adriana Pavone, Vincenza Tudini

Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to provide teachers of Italian, from primary to tertiary level, an introduction to the pedagogy of teaching culture and language in the language classroom. In the present volume it also serves a contrastive purpose with other languages and cultures. The field is extremely complex and vast. For the purposes of this chapter, the focus will be mainly on culture in everyday verbal and non-verbal communication. Such interconnected aspects of language and culture are perhaps the least obvious and therefore often excluded or dealt with superficially in text books and language pedagogy. The fact remains that spoken interaction is, however, one of the crucial aspects of successful communication which in turn is a major ingredient of any social interaction. An awareness of the rules of face-to-face communication, is therefore fundamental to human communication because it prevents breakdown in relations and interactions.

Teachers should therefore aim to develop students' linguistic and sociolinguistic competence. Such competence would enable them to listen, comprehend and recognise standard linguistic and cultural traits of Italian, reproduce them in their own language production, as well as a strategic competence that enables them to repair damaged interactions.¹ It is not however our intention to turn students into parrots of the target culture (*cultura e lingua d'arrivo*); conversely we hope to engender an appreciation of difference rather than reinforce cultural stereotypes. In this paradigm students are seen as "intercultural travellers", moving between different cultural spaces, retaining their identity/ies, yet gaining a new one. Thus building bridges between cultures, promoting tolerance and respect and ultimately, producing peaceful cultural practices.²

In this light, students of Italian also need to be aware that Italy is now, like France, Germany and Australia, a country of immigration. At the beginning of 2000

there were one and half million foreigners residing in Italy³, and at the end of 2000 there were nearly three million foreigners⁴ living in Italy, mainly from Africa, Eastern European countries, Asia and Latin America. Italy's linguistic and cultural diversity now is not just regional⁵, but transnational. Although most immigrants learn the basic rules of communication quickly, it is important students of Italian in Australia have knowledge of these changes in Italian society and that, as in Australia, different ethnic groups have different cultural practices. Students need to be aware also that Italian culture is not fixed. On the contrary, it is in constant flux, especially as it comes into contact with other cultures.

Part one of the chapter consists of a theoretical introduction to teaching and learning Italian language as culture. Part two provides practical ideas, organised in tasks (*attività*) or modules (*unità didattiche*), which can be used at different language levels in schools and universities for teaching the culture embedded in everyday verbal and non-verbal communication. Both sections should serve as a starting point for reflection, discussion and students' oral (and written) text production, followed by teachers' feedback.

Part one — Culture in spoken (and written) Italian

The communicative profile of Italian language and culture illustrated here, along the parameters established by Kerbrat-Orecchioni (1994) and Crozet (1998), focuses on five themes fundamental to verbal and non-verbal communication. The five themes discussed below are: the importance Italians place on speaking, their approach to interpersonal relationships, rules of politeness, level of ritualisation and lastly "emotionology" in Italian culture. In the illustration of these five tenets of communication, we have drawn upon several sources, some on general research in overlapping fields such as pragmatics, discourse analysis and anthropology. Above all we have based our descriptions and discussion of the five themes on scholarly texts written by Italian linguists and, occasionally, on our own experiences in Italy. The aim is to develop a critical awareness of general cultural traits expressed in everyday conversation in Italy at a national level, whilst pointing out that there are geographical and social cultural differences.⁶ By "critical" awareness we mean that both teachers and students, when reading materials on the subject, are able to discern between blatant stereotype and cultural trait, between regional trait or biased description.

Verbal and non-verbal communication is receiving more attention in Italy, at the research and didactic level (Lavinio 1992: vii-viii), as the importance of oral communication skills has been acknowledged. Italian, as Beccaria (1988: 57, 121) remarks, was originally a written language, a literary language. This literary tradition has been upheld in the school curriculum where in the past written texts, especially literary, have dominated over oral ones until the 1979 reform (De Mauro 1979, Bonfadini 1986). It is now recognised that students need to express themselves

in a variety of registers, written and verbal, appropriate for different situations. As Lombardi Vallauri (1999: 87) remarks, it is not always good to talk like a "*libro stampato*". Indeed in some situations it will give the impression of stuffiness. At the same time it is also inappropriate to address informally, by using a very colloquial register, or the "*tu*" form, a functionary from the Embassy or a waiter in a restaurant whom you have never met. Another point that needs to be stressed is coherence. For example you will not hear an Italian addressing someone with a title such as signora and then using the informal "*tu*", conversely, if you are insulting someone, verbally and with gesture, you are not likely to use a very formal title. Verbal and non-verbal communication seldom breaks coherent rules, only when the speakers use a very ironic tone, but at the same time, wish to maintain distance. These instances can occur in the political arena when a minister, during a particularly heated debate, may address a colleague as follows: «*Mio caro signore, lei è davvero un cretino*», «My dear sir, you are truly a cretin».

Importance placed on speaking

Level of verbosity

Italians generally place a lot of importance on speaking. There is however variety due to geographical, social and individual reasons. Generally though, speaking, both in public and in private, is a central part of Italian culture. Piazzas, even in winter, are full of people chatting about politics and the economic situation. In Italian conversation, both in the private and public sphere, the pitch is usually higher and the "tone" more lively than in typical conversation, so much so that Anglo-Saxon Australians often mistake what is "normal" Italian conversation as violent argumentation. The degrees of loudness and liveliness vary from region to region, according to social cultural background and individual character. It is perfectly normal for women to shout from window to window in some streets of Naples and through the South of Italy, while this is far less likely in some apartment blocks in Milan. It is also usual to hear people discuss politics loudly in bars or in the main piazza in Milan, Bologna or Florence. In the private sphere, it is not unusual to have a group of 10 people all talking contemporaneously to a certain extent. As the French, Italians generally, unlike Anglo-Saxon Australians, do not wait for the other person to finish speaking (Béal 1992 quoted in Crozet 1998).

Silence

Silence is generally not as important as speaking; in many instances, it is not rude, for example, not to wait for one's turn when speaking (as seems to be in Britain or Australia), so that voices overlap and get louder and louder. This general rule is moderated by factors such as context, situation, speakers' motivations and relationship between speakers. The proverb: «*Forza, dite qualcosa che altrimenti*

nasce un prete» (Go on, say something otherwise a priest will be born!), is used especially in Veneto and Romagna. This highlights the low consideration, almost dread, assigned to silence in these regions, where anticlericalism is very high; in the case of Romagna, dominated by Papal rule for centuries, and for Veneto, not under the Papacy, however, they are traditionally very Catholic, although perhaps more fearful than respectful of priests. Turn-taking rules in Italian conversation do not allow for silent pauses which are perceived as a lack of interest in the subject or an inability to carry a conversation. These are only general rules — levels of verbosity of course can vary across regions, urban and rural areas, socio-economic background, situation and individuals.

A recent study of norms of interaction in Italian conversation (Bazzanella 1994: 23) found that there were few *"pause vuote"* [silent pauses] in Italian conversation, but a high percentage of *"pause piene"*, that is, pauses that contain sounds such as "hmmm" or the lengthening of a vowel *"dicooo"*. She also found a very high percentage of *"accavallamenti"* [overlapping] (1994:71) in the *"texture of Italian discourse"*, rather than turn-taking with pauses. These findings seem to confirm that Italians generally avoid silence in conversation, as they value a flowing lively conversation.

Approaches to interpersonal relationships

It has been recognised that gesture is not biologically inherited, or universal, as previously thought, but is instead *"the product of social and cultural differences"* and that there are *"many languages of gesture and many dialects"* (Thomas 1991). The fact that different societies have different gestures carrying different meanings highlights the sociocultural, rather than universal basis of gesture. As Thomas (1991: 3) points out, the Italian gesture for *"Come here quickly!"* corresponds to the British sign for *"Go away at once!"*. This example alone highlights the importance of including gesture in the teaching and learning of languages, although in Italy, gesture, and the degree to which it is used in communication, varies across social, geographical and situational *"boundaries"*. An introduction to the most performed gesture and an understanding of their cultural roots should develop better communicative competence by enabling students to recognise, understand, and if they wish, perform gesture in their communication with Italians. An insight into gesture also provides the opportunity for a fruitful exploration of Italian cultural history.

In his chapter *"Gli stili del parlato"*, Sobrero (1994: 35–42) remarks that although interpersonal relationships are generally more flexible and varied, they have also undergone changes due to the differences in cultural background, environment, type of rapport and reasons for which people stop for a chat. Whilst twenty or thirty years ago shopping at the local *Alimentari* (delicatessen) would have been an occasion for chatting (*interazione "calda"*) since most people would have known each other, nowadays, it is more common to have *interazioni "fredde"* [cold interactions] in this

type of place (1994: 40) because people do not know each other, therefore exchanges are minimal and superficial. These changes, according to the author, have affected big cities rather than small centres, where it is still common to see people shopping in small shops rather than supermarkets and having "warm" exchanges. Conversely, Sobrero remarks that at the workplace, generally, Italians are more informal than in the past.

Kinesic behaviour

Research in this area of Italian non-linguistic social interaction has often been conducted by Anglo-Saxon researchers who often provide stereotyped views of Italian cultures, sometimes mistaking local or regional gestures for national traits. Bertelli and Centanni (1995:11) lament this caricature of Italians, and point out that often others, including prominent historical figures such as Churchill, have made ample use of gesture.⁷ Even though generally Italians may be more tolerant of proximity (proxemics) and physical contact during conversation (haptics) and may also be more expressive with their gestures and facial expressions than Anglo-Saxon Australians, there are individual differences as well as diatopic, diastratic, and diafasic variables. Interestingly, Thomas (1991:11) highlights that the 20th century has seen an increase of the use of gesture along with a rejection of "classical restraints" across the middle-classes youth of Europe and America⁸. This, according to Thomas, implies a move towards a more democratic society. Sobrero (1994:36-37), instead, remarks that few of the 300 gestures listed by de Jorio (1832) are still recognised, and that generally, in public speaking in Italy is more "measured" (less gesture and gesticulating), while gesture in private speaking varies diatopically and diastratically. At the same time, he says that some of the Campanian and Sicilian gestures have been absorbed into a near-standard *koinè*. As far as terms of address, according to Sobrero, there is no sharp difference between formal and informal registers and situations, that there is a *continuum* (Berruto 1993: 14-18) between the two with a high proportion of "*stili del parlato intermedi*" (Sobrero 1994: 40-41).

Gestures (and postures) particular facial expressions, eye contact and gaze

Diadori (1990:16-20) lists four reasons for including gesture in pedagogy: for better oral comprehension, to avoid misunderstandings, to increase one's knowledge of the different registers, to become better acquainted with cultural practices of the country and to have a deeper appreciation, rather than stereotypical labelling of diatopic cultural differences. The importance of gaining an active kinesic competence, as Diadori (1990:20) points out, is evident in cross-cultural misinterpretation of gesture. This can lead to stereotyped views, for example, "southerner" gestures are often perceived in the north as indicating a lack of education, or, vice versa the "restraint" shown by Anglo-Saxons in interpersonal relations is interpreted as coldness. On a day-to-day basis, the ability to at least recognise the most common gestures used by

Italians, and the context in which they are used as well as the register, can ensure a better communicative competence and avoid misunderstandings.⁹

Diadori selected 100 gestures on specific criteria (1990:14-15) including their "standard" character, that is, that they can be found across regions and across social groups. The gestures (including also physical contact such as kissing, or facial expressions or winking) have been classified according to their linguistic function (eg. social convention: greetings) in today's Italy. Each gesture is presented in its social contexts. For these reasons it is an excellent tool for the language classroom, as exemplified in part two by Pavone. Illustrations of some Italian gestures are also available in Munari (1994). Some of the most common gestures, listed in Diadori (1990), and used throughout Italy are:

- lifting the thumb used both in formal and informal contexts to express approval.
- forming a ring with the index finger and the thumb in informal contexts indicates approval (OK);
- forming the letter "V" with index and middle finger to express satisfaction in an informal context (these three gestures are intercultural since they are diffused in many countries);
- beating a hand against the neck in informal contexts means disapproval;
- passing a hand under the chin used in informal contexts to manifest your indifference towards something;
- forming a "cup" shape with the hand and moving the hand towards the body used in informal context to express: "What on earth do you want from me?" (A moving picture is available at this web site: <http://www.enosicilia.com/dictionary.html>);
- drawing a line in front of the forehead with the back of the hand expresses boredom in informal contexts;
- opening and closing the hand expresses fear in informal contexts;
- lifting the hand, with the arm stretched out, down and up, is a way of insulting someone in informal contexts often accompanied by sentences such as "Go to hell!".

Terms of address

As Lombardi Vallauri (1999: 87) highlights with a particularly appropriate metaphor in his recent publication on oral communication in Italian, levels of formality in speech are to a great extent determined by the situation. "*Sapersi cambiare d'abito*" (knowing when to change attire) (Lombardi Vallauri 1999: 87) is one of the fundamental rules of communication and of rules of behaviour ("*saper stare al mondo*": 87). Although, as with gesture, there is a gradual progression towards informality, it is still crucial for students of Italian (or anyone visiting Italy) to know which attire to wear in which context ("*a ogni contesto l'abito giusto*", 1999: 87). Transgression of the rules of interpersonal relationships, especially forms of address, can lead to communication breakdown and serious consequences when trying to establish links. Often it is not just the context, relationship and age of the addressee that need to be taken into

account. For example, in July 2000 an Italian colleague told Carroli that foreigners' "informality" can have serious consequences and she explained that recently a young American lecturer had addressed with *"tu"* (informal you) and *"ciao"* an elderly professor at an Italian university. The professor not only reproached him by stating in no uncertain terms that he should be addressed with the *"lei"*, but also lost respect for the young lecturer who had shown such ignorance of the basic rules of address in Italian society. Formal address in the example above was appropriate because of the age, cultural milieu and the situation (first meeting). In such circumstances socio-cultural background (*"retroterra culturale"*) is more important than context and relationship. It is true that among peers, in work contexts, usually the less formal *"tu"*, or the *"lei"* accompanied by first name, instead of surname, are now often used, but it cannot be assumed to be a general rule. It is therefore much safer to always address colleagues, especially on the first meeting, also in emails, with the formal term of address (*"lei"*) and coherently combined with *"Buongiorno"* or *"Buonasera"*, or in writing with *"Distinti saluti"* or *"Con i migliori saluti"* (see Pavone's tasks on social conventions in part two).

All three terms of address, the familiar second person *"tu"*, the polite *"lei"* and *"voi"* are still used in different ways in different parts of the country. *"voi"* is used mainly in Southern Italy. The reasons that determine the choice of terms of address, titles and names are rather complex, they certainly do not only depend on age but also on context, speakers' motivations, relationships, type of verbal and written interaction. It is not unusual to hear two speakers switch between the *"lei — tu"*; *"tu" — lei* or in certain regions in the South, *"lei — voi"*¹⁰. (See Tadini's Task 5 on *Roma città aperta* for tertiary learners in part two.)

The move towards less formal terms of address, spoken registers and greetings can be interpreted as a gradual shift towards a more egalitarian society.¹¹ At the institutional level there has also been an attempt to simplify the hierarchical register of bureaucracy and politics. This is reflected in the shift towards the *"tu"* form or *lei* accompanied by first name at work, and in written correspondence with weaker forms such as *"lei"* without a capital *"L"*, or the preference for the plural pronoun *"voi"* rather than *"loro"* or *"loro"* rather *"Loro"*. Forms such as *"Ella"* have largely been abandoned except perhaps in bureaucratic correspondence where they are still encountered. As Sobrero (1994:39) remarks, it is quite common in today's Italy to address anyone below 30–35 years of age with the *"tu"* and with *"ciao"* even with complete strangers, met for example while waiting in a queue. However, according to him, this does not mean that we have all become good friends, but that what has changed is the meaning of social interactions. He defines some of this new dimension as hypocritical informality because such encounters, even if accompanied by informal terms of address, are, as he calls them, *"cold"*. They are meaningless since you do not know the person and will probably never see her again. What these changes imply for the Italian language, though, is an enrichment of the formal register, as it becomes less stuffy and more lively, and a standardisation of the less formal register. Sobrero

(1994: 42) defines this "new" Italian in positive terms, as *una lingua plastica*, not "*di plastica*", that is not any more a fixed, written literary language but a vivacious, culturally rich language — as he calls it, "*una lingua-lingua*".

Avoidance or love of conflict

Italians generally enjoy conflict in conversation, somehow almost considering it a necessary ingredient of an intelligent exchange of opinions and for reaching, or not reaching, a resolution (see also Crozet and Maurer, this volume). Anglo-Saxon Australians often comment that the pitch and tone of Italian verbal exchanges is unsettling and, at times, even upsetting, since they mistake them for fighting rather than lively conversations. Australians may also become very frustrated if they quietly wait for their turn instead of speaking over their Italian interlocutors, since that turn may never come, and Italians may wonder whether their Australian friends are so silent because they are uninterested in the conversation or cannot speak Italian. In Italian culture conflict is generally seen as a natural, even pleasant and creative path, to consensus. This general view is supported by Bazzanella's findings in her analysis of Italian conversations in different settings (eg. home, TV) which found a high level of conflict (*conflittualità*) (1994). Bazzanella (1994:201) found that the presence of conflict is to a large extent influenced by the status relationships between speakers and their individual style and cultural "*abitudini*".

Rules of politeness

As Sifianou (1992:46) states, "the concept of 'politeness', which represents an abstract, social value is most probably universal in some form or other, even though the way in which this concept is visualised and thus defined and how it is realised verbally and non-verbally will most probably be culture-specific". It is also true, that "the rules of politeness, that is rules which determine appropriate behaviour, are one of the aspects of culture which are clearly reflected in language". Furthermore, as Sifianou states, "the relationship of the interactants, their age, the specific situation, and so on, will directly affect their language use to degrees determined by the culture (Sifianou 1992:12). There are differences in thanking, negative or positive use of politeness in Italian and Australian society. Students need to become aware of such differences to avoid appearing rude or over polite (too much thanking, which Italians think is typical of Anglo-Saxon societies). Both negative and positive politeness is valued in Italian society in different degrees. Like the French (Béal 1992 quoted in Crozet 1998), Italians are certainly more concerned with long-term preservation of face. In day-to-day interactions Italians are generally more frank than Anglo-Saxon Australians, they can lose and regain face. They are generally less afraid of face threatening act such as insults and compliments. They are also less protective of one's face (strategies needed to protect face, gravity of face threatening acts, social distance, power relation; respect for one's individual territory important). This of

course varies greatly across regions, socio-economic, educational background. Zorzi Calò (1990: 104, quoted in Bazzanella 1994: 201) remarks how pauses in Italian conversation usually indicate interruptions due to dispreferred sections of speech, whilst Anglo-Saxons tend to repair it as soon as the "dispreferred" section has been produced. This could itself be linked to immediate face-saving. Zorzi Calò (in Bazzanella 1994: 69) also found that the cultural difference between Italians and Anglo-Saxons is shown by the British preference for "*autocorrezione*" (face-saving) and for the "*eterocorrezione*" by Italians. In Italian conversation it is usually one of the other speakers who urge the interlocutor to correct herself.

Thanking

In pragmatic linguistics thanking is defined as "routines" as opposed to "speech acts". Whilst speech acts usually aim at producing a social outcome, routines such as foreseeable greetings (How are you?) and thanking (thank you) do not add anything to the conversation and are disconnected to the act of thanking (<http://helios.unive.it/~italslab/nozion/nozr.htm>). This may be one of the reasons why this "routine" thanking is generally less used in Italian than in English. Usually, in Italian, questions such as "*come stai?*" are asked to obtain an answer from the interlocutor, and not as a stereotypical salute. Similarly, thanking, depending on the social and situational context is used for specific purposes, to obtain a favour, in sign of deference, to truly express gratitude. Thanking is less common within families or among friends in Italy because of different expectations among family members.¹² Conversely, Italians use more compliments, especially in informal spoken interaction (*come sei bella oggi*, *ciao bella*) than is typical among Anglo-Saxons. Again, this depends on several factors such as the type of interaction, the intention of the interlocutors, the register used and the relationship between the speakers.

Level of ritualisation (rituals and routines)

This varies from region by region and social context. Generally, conversational rules are not dominated by rituals or by specific routines or social cultural codes. Very strict Catholics (a minority of Italians) thank God before eating, but would not expect an outsider or a non-believer to follow this ritual. Perhaps eating together at lunch and dinner, sitting at the table and talking, can be considered a ritual since it plays such an important role in Italian society. Without assuming or asserting that each Italian family has two meals a day together, it is safe to say that, unlike among Anglo-Saxons, most families in Italy spend a longer amount of time sitting, eating and talking together. "*Il pranzo*" and "*la cena*" are in this sense cultural events. Unlike in Australia, people in Italy, before starting a meal wish each other "good appetite" (*buon appetito*). Some families are also very strict about times and presence, children are at times severely reproached, guests who arrive late are not very well regarded.

Emotionology in Italian culture

As Wierzbicka (1999) asserts in her recent publication on emotions, while “the concept of ‘feeling’ is universal [...] the concept of ‘emotion’ is culture-bound”. In Italian culture, generally, emotions are allowed to be expressed more openly than in Anglo-Saxons culture. This is possibly signalled by the different use of lexical items. In Italian, as in German, French, or Russian, there are no words analogous to *emotional*. Wierzbicka (1999:19), remarks that while in English “emotional” has negative connotations, it does not in Italian: “there is a certain unconscious ‘ideology’: an ‘ideology’ which assumes that showing feelings over which one has no control is a departure from ‘normal’ behaviour”. In Italian, the term “*emozione*” is more akin to “passion” and is even used to describe a fine soccer game “*pieno di emozione*” meaning “an engaging game”.¹³

Concepts of “emotion”, such as happiness and anger, are different in Italian and English cultures. For example the “English concept of ‘anger’ does not match [...] the Italian concept of ‘*rabbia*’” (Wierzbicka 1999: 275) and the English term “happy” does not correspond exactly to “felice”. In English there are “happy” or “sad” or “angry” faces, whilst in Italian this concept does not exist; one is either “happy” or “sad” or “angry”. According to Wierzbicka (1999:53) this is a consequence of the fact that “the English adjective happy is much ‘weaker’ in meaning than the corresponding adjectives in [...] Italian (*felice*), which do imply a feeling of happiness.” This could indicate a willingness on the part of most Italians to feel and show deep emotion, as opposed to British society — what you show the world through your face. An example of deep feeling versus “face-feeling” is “I am happy, because I am happy.” Massi Rosolino was quoted saying during the 2000 Olympic games. The journalist wrote in brackets: “We think it lost something in the translation” (*Canberra Times*, Monday, September 25, 2000).

Wierzbicka’s observations are relevant because they highlight the relationship between languages, cultures and emotions. The different naming of emotions in different cultures has shaped their cultural use. Although generally in Italian society emotions are expressed more freely than in Anglo-Saxon Australian society the degree to which emotions are expressed depends on the individual, on the situation and on the motivations, as with all other verbal or non-verbal communication behaviour.

Part two — Tasks for the teaching of language as culture:

Primary level

Let's play in Italian

The following activities have been developed for a class of *Prima media* (grade 6) students of the Italian School in Asmara, Eritrea. The students speak Tigrinya as mother tongue, but are fluent in Italian as it is the language used as means of instruction in the majority of curriculum areas from primary school onward. As Italian is mainly confined to the school environment, students lack most sociolinguistic skills. They know how to interact with teachers using — not without difficulties — the formal way of address, but possess a limited competence when it comes to communicating with peers in everyday situations, which is reflected in their switching into Tigrinya when talking to class mates even during lessons.

Moreover, although the students learn about Italy and Italian culture (high culture, but also popular culture) through school subjects, their awareness of the "norms of interaction" among their Italian peers is very limited as these aspects have not been made explicit in language teaching and the presence of a few Italian native speakers among the students of the school is not sufficient to ensure that these traits are learnt in a natural way.

This unit of work on the language of games has been written by the teacher of Italian (Pavone) as part of the new Italian curriculum developed between 1995 and 1998 to respond to the changing needs of the learners (Italian had become a foreign/second language for nearly everybody). The writer tried it out successfully with the students twice and noticed that the activities gave scope for the Eritrean children to compare their own traditions with the Italian ones, finding out similarities and differences.

GIOCHIAMO IN ITALIANO

Target group

- Eritrean grade 6 students attending the Italian school in Asmara

Main aims:

- explore the language of games
- learn how to give oral/written instructions
- research traditional Eritrean games
- compare with games played by Italian children

Activities:

Play a well known game with children: ex. "Nascondino"

- 1 Discuss together the various phases of the game
- 2 Brainstorm the language needed to carry out the game — draw a spider graph (Activity sheet 1)
- 3 Expand discussing methods to choose the child who's going to start the game (Activity sheet 2)
- 4 Introduce "Le conte" — children choose one
- 5 Children play the game — teacher records on video
- 6 View the video — discuss performance, language, behaviour.

IL LINGUAGGIO DEI GIOCHI (Activity sheet 1)

The vocabulary list is compiled with students as a result of brainstorming. Students draw from their own linguistic knowledge, attempt to translate expressions from Tigrinya to Italian, mime actions.

la squadra

il giocatore / la giocatrice

il / la capogioco

il compagno / la compagna

il / la caposquadra

il / la cronometrista

il giro

la partita (a carte, a dama, a pallavolo, a tennis, a calcio...)

la gara

le regole le istruzioni

i punti il punteggio

acqua, acquetta, fuochino, fuoco

a occhi chiusi

pari o dispari

testa o croce

aspettare il proprio turno ("Aspetta il tuo turno!")

rispettare il proprio turno ("Rispetta il tuo turno!")

toccare a ... ("A chi tocca?" "Tocca a me")

stare sotto ("Chi sta sotto?" "Stai sotto tu")

fare la conta/ contare fino a ...

"Pronti ? . . . via!"

essere fuori gioco ("Hai sbagliato, sei fuori adesso")

stare fuori ("Hai sbagliato, stai fuori/stai fermo un giro")

vincere — essere/arrivare primo

perdere — essere/arrivare ultimo

fare finta di ... imbrogliare — barare

mettere in palio un premio

estrarre a sorte

"Non spingere!" "Non spingete!"

"Ahi! Mi sono fatto/a male." "Ahi! Che male!"

"Dammi . . . , per favore."

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

LA SCELTA DEL CAPOSQUADRA (Activity sheet 2)

Children are presented with a number of traditional Italian ways of choosing a team captain. They show comprehension of the written text acting out the various ways of drawing lots and choose their favourite one. In this context they are presented with Italian "conte" which they compare with the ones they use in their own language.

- *Gettare una moneta. I bambini devono scegliere "testa" o "croce" della moneta lanciata in aria da uno dei giocatori. Il primo che indovina è il primo a giocare o il primo a "star sotto".*
- *Tirare la pagliuzza. Il capogioco, o uno dei giocatori, tiene chiuse nella mano un certo numero di pagliuzze (o fili d'erba o nastri o listerelle di carta). Una sola di queste pagliuzze è più corta delle altre, ma i giocatori non sanno qual è. Ogni giocatore deve prendere una pagliuzza: chi ottiene la pagliuzza più corta "sta sotto", è il primo a partire oppure fa il caposquadra.*
- *Pari o dispari. Il capogioco tiene le mani dietro la schiena e forma con le dita un numero. Chi indovina per primo se il numero è pari o dispari inizia il gioco o è scelto come caposquadra.*
- *Estrarre a sorte. Si scrivono su bigliettini di carta i nomi di tutti i giocatori. Si mettono i bigliettini in un recipiente (una scatola, un cestino o un cappello) e si invita un bambino bendato a estrarre un bigliettino alla volta.*
- *Le conte. I giocatori formano un cerchio e uno di essi, al centro, recita la filastrocca toccando con la mano un compagno dopo l'altro ad ogni parola o ad ogni sillaba della filastrocca. Il giocatore che viene toccato dall'ultima parola o sillaba della filastrocca, è prescelto.*

SPIEGHIAMO I GIOCHI

These activities are aimed at developing students' writing skills.

- 1 *Students are given suggestions on how to write the instructions for a game. These are discussed as a whole class. (Activity sheet 3)*
- 2 *Follows a reflection on some aspects of the language: choice of verb mood: infinitive vs. imperative, use of prepositions.*
- 3 *Students write the instructions for the game "Nascondino" starting from a writing frame. (Activity sheet 4)*

SCRIVERE LE ISTRUZIONI PER UN GIOCO (Activity sheet 3)

- 1 Prima di cominciare a scrivere, devi decidere quali informazioni è necessario dare.
- 2 Tieni presente che chi legge probabilmente non conosce il gioco e tu devi dare al tuo lettore tutte le informazioni necessarie per poter giocare.
- 3 Puoi iniziare con una breve introduzione che dia un'idea del tipo di gioco (es. È un gioco di società, un gioco di squadra, gioco con la palla, ...) e qualche informazione generale su di esso (è un gioco molto noto, conosciuto da tutti i bambini, è un gioco che piace a grandi e bambini, ...).
- 4 A questo punto è bene fornire le informazioni generali, ad esempio quali sono gli spazi necessari (dove si gioca), il numero dei giocatori, i materiali occorrenti.
- 5 Elenca poi ordinatamente tutto quello che si deve fare. Spiega le operazioni o le azioni da fare in modo preciso e senza tralasciare nulla (es. "saltare da un quadrato all'altro su un piede solo e facendo attenzione a non toccare le righe di divisione").
- 6 Spiega qual è lo scopo del gioco (come si fa a vincere?) e come viene valutato il punteggio.
- 7 Aspetti formali del testo:
 - scegli la forma che consideri più adatta e poi fai attenzione a mantenerla per tutto il testo. Per forma si intende: frasi con l'imperativo o con l'infinito; seconda persona singolare o plurale.
 - indica con chiarezza l'ordine delle operazioni da compiere per mezzo delle congiunzioni e delle espressioni avverbiali adeguate: es. Per prima cosa, poi, dopo, prima di, intanto, mentre, infine, ...
 - scegli le parole più adatte e più chiare per descrivere i materiali, i ruoli e le azioni
 - se lo ritieni necessario, fai un disegno per spiegare meglio il gioco.

SCRITTURA GUIDATA (Activity sheet 4)

How to write the instruction for a game

After playing "Nascondino" together, the children reflect on the game and explain how to play it. The teacher presents a written transcription of the oral explanation and (an example follows) discusses with students the differences between oral and written texts. The students complete the written explanation following a frame and compare their text with the example given by the teacher.

Parole chiave del gioco:

stare sotto; tana

Spiegazione orale

"Si fa così: questa è la tana. Io non guardo e conto fino a 30.

Intanto voi vi nascondete. Dopo io vi cerco e, quando trovo il vostro nascondiglio, prima grido il vostro nome e poi corro alla tana. Chi arriva prima alla tana grida: "Tana!". Se arrivo prima io alla tana allora l'altro prende il mio il posto e continua a cercare gli altri, altrimenti continuo io."

Spiegazione scritta

Nome del gioco: Nascondino

Numero dei giocatori: _____

Materiali: _____

Luogo: _____

Un giocatore "sta sotto" e si mette _____

Con la faccia contro l'albero, a occhi chiusi, _____

Nel frattempo _____

Quando ha finito di contare, "chi sta sotto" _____

Appena ne trova uno _____

Se "chi sta sotto" riesce a toccarla per primo, allora _____

Se invece arriva prima alla "tana" chi è stato scoperto, _____

Text given by the teacher as example

Nome del gioco: Nascondino

Numero dei giocatori: da 3 in su

Materiali: nessuno

Luogo: all'aperto

Un giocatore "sta sotto" e si mette vicino ad un albero o un'altra "tana". Con la faccia contro l'albero, a occhi chiusi, comincia a contare ad alta voce fino a 30. Nel frattempo gli altri si nascondono. Quando ha finito di contare, "chi sta sotto" va a cercare gli altri giocatori. Appena ne trova uno grida il suo nome e poi tutti e due corrono alla "tana". Se "chi sta sotto" riesce a toccarla per primo, allora l'altro prende il suo posto e si mette a cercare i giocatori ancora nascosti. Se invece arriva prima alla "tana" chi è stato scoperto, allora "chi sta sotto" deve continuare a cercare gli altri.

I NOSTRI GIOCHI

- 1 *Students research traditional Eritrean games — write a list*
- 2 *Students describe in writing their favourite game*
- 3 *The games are presented orally to the rest of the class — comparison and discussion follow.*

Children were asked to describe their favourite game. These are their contributions. Only minor changes have been made to their texts.

"Robba te robba"

Questo gioco lo giochiamo all'aperto. Si gioca con il bastone e con un pezzo di legno. Ci vogliono due persone. Uno dice "Robba" e l'altro risponde "Te robba". Poi con il bastone picchi il pezzo di legno e il piccolo pezzo di legno salta e poi ancora lo picchi. Se riesci a prenderlo vinci e prendi dieci centesimi. Se non vinci non ricevi niente. Questo gioco si gioca con i soldi o come vuoi.

Antonio

"Tembo"

Il mio gioco preferito è "Tembo". Si gioca con almeno tre persone. Si gioca così: se si è più di tre persone si formano due gruppi e si fa testa o croce per vedere chi prende la palla e si inizia il gioco. Si cerca di colpire l'avversario; questo può difendersi con le mani.

Si stabilisce un punto di ritrovo e i compagni non colpiti devono contare fino a 100 (o ciò che si è stabilito) e poi possono salvare il compagno.

Ifoi

"Moscaceca"

E' un gioco che si gioca con più bambini.

"Ghebetu"

Di solito lo giocano gli sposi. E' un gioco particolare. Lo giocano anche nei villaggi.

"Hundai"

Si gioca con cinque sassi piccoli.

"Campana"

Si gioca facendo per terra un rettangolo e ci fai dentro sei righe.

Aglaia

"Girorai — girorai"

E' un gioco che si gioca da 10 persone in su. Scelgono un prescelto che deve girare attorno al cerchio formato dai bambini. Quello che gira deve avere un fazzoletto e si mette a girare attorno al cerchio formato, poi tira il fazzoletto a un ragazzo seduto nel cerchio dietro la sua schiena e se il ragazzo seduto non se ne accorge quello che gira lo tiene e va dentro al cerchio, però il ragazzo che gira lo tiene solo dopo che lui ha fatto un giro attorno al cerchio. Ma se il ragazzo seduto se ne accorge, si mette a correre intorno al cerchio per un giro, poi torna al suo posto e così non viene preso e quello che gira deve rifare tutto.

Simone

"Adararari"

E' un gioco tipico in Eritrea. Si gioca in tre persone e più. Questo gioco è giocato così. Una persona, prescelta facendo il "bim, bom, bam", si siede in ginocchio a qualcuno o su una sedia poi chiude gli occhi. Uno dei ragazzi allora lo picchia e lui deve sapere chi lo ha picchiato. Se non lo sa deve chiudere un'altra volta gli occhi e si continua il gioco. Se indovina allora sta sotto chi lo ha picchiato.

Sem

"Seven stars"

Si gioca con più di due giocatori e una palla. Si gioca all'aperto di fronte a un muro. Devi lanciare la palla contro il muro in vari modi e poi prenderla. Così.

Con la palla tu devi toccare il muro e poi prenderla sette volte. Poi per sei volte devi farla toccare prima per terra e poi contro il muro. Per cinque volte è il contrario del sei: prima contro il muro e poi per terra. Per quattro volte devi farla passare sotto il piede tirandola facendo in modo che tocchi il muro e poi prenderla. Per tre volte devi farla battere contro il muro prima battendo le mani tre volte. Per due volte la tiri girandoti due volte prima di acchiapparla. Per una volta girando soltanto una volta.

FINE

Debora

"Ghebeta"

Ghebeta si gioca in casa o in cortile. Non è molto usato ad Asmara ma si gioca nei villaggi. Spesso lo giocano gli sposi. Si gioca con due persone e si tiene uno di riserva.

C'è una tavoletta con 12 buchi o si può giocare scavando per terra. In ogni buco ci sono tre sassi. E in tutto ci devono essere 36 sassi di diversi colori, ad esempio 18 sassi bianchi e 18 sassi neri.

Dà un buco si deve prendere i tre sassi e metterli uno per uno negli altri buchi. E in fine quello che ha tanti sassi vince.

Samrawit

"Asrarvi"

Questo gioco si chiama "Asrarvi" e si gioca in più di due persone. Se ad esempio sono due persone ciascuna delle due tiene in mano un sasso. Poi una delle due persone tira il sasso e poi tira il secondo ragazzo. Se il sasso del secondo ragazzo è dopo il sasso del primo ragazzo, il primo ragazzo sale sulla schiena del secondo ragazzo e tiene in mano due sassi e li tira a uno a uno. Prima tira il primo sasso e poi mentre tira il secondo sasso se tocca il primo sasso continua a fare così. Ma se il secondo sasso non ha toccato il primo sasso cominciano da capo.

Icram

"Telei-telei"

Il mio gioco preferito è "Telei-telei". E' un gioco che si gioca anche con due persone. Per terra si disegna un grande quadrato diviso in 12 parti. Ci sono 12 numeri e tu devi andare dall'uno al due, al tre e fino al dodici. Quando arrivi senza sbagliare con il sasso al 12 passi per l'uno ed esci e poi ricominci e così via.

Sara

"Tempo"

Il gioco che voglio descrivere è il gioco a tempo. Si gioca con la palla e bisogna essere almeno in tre persone. Uno sta in mezzo e gli altri due davanti e dietro di lui. I due si passano la palla e cercano di colpire quello che sta in mezzo. Questo di deve riparare con le mani.

Ariam

Secondary level (years 8-10) or tertiary: from introductory to continuing level

This unit of work has been developed by Pavone to be used with grade 10 students beginning a two years GCSE Italian course in an English school. The students had English as mother tongue and little or no previous knowledge of Italian. Given the fact that the English GCSE (General Certificate of Secondary Education) examination is based on a very prescriptive syllabus which has to be covered in a short period of time, the teacher is left with little opportunities to explore the target language cultural traits. It is therefore even more important to focus the units of work on the ways in which the communication is carried out by speakers of Italian, including non verbal traits such as body language which are generally neglected as they are not assessed by tests.

The following activities try to lead the students, from the very beginning, to develop a more complete communicative competence which includes awareness of the ways of living that underlie such a common language function like greeting.

"I SALUTI"

1 INTRODUCING THE LANGUAGE

- 1.1 The teacher revises greetings and parts of the day with pictures.
- 1.2 Teacher asks students to compare greetings with English equivalents and to point out differences and similarities.
- 1.3 Teacher reminds that "Buonanotte" is used only when taking leave before going to bed.
- 1.4 Why isn't "Buon pomeriggio" used? Students to think of reasons.

2 "QUANDO APRE?" Looking at opening times of shops and services

- 2.1 Students look at hand-out, summarise and compare in Italian. Students to discuss differences in lifestyle between Italy and their country and find an explanation to why "Buon pomeriggio" is not used. Teacher to point out changes in lifestyle. (Activity sheet 1)
- 2.2 Alternatively, make a search of the Internet.

3 "A CHE ORA?" Exploring daily routines and comparing "normal" times for doing things

- 3.1 Students are provided with a list of daily activities and have to find out when Italians usually do them. To collect the information, each student has to interview 5 Italian students via email (possibly create links with different parts of Italy to get geographical variation). (Activity sheet 2)
- 3.2 Results of all interviews are put together and compared with habits in local (Australian) communities.

- 4 **"BACI e ABBRACCI Gestualità e contatto fisico"** — Students examine body language involved in greetings, notice the high degree of physical contact, reflect over use of formal versus informal register

- 4.1 Students are presented with videoclips from films and TV showing people meeting and greeting.
- 4.2 *Senza Parole* (Diadori 1990) — Convenzioni sociali, p. 29 — "MA LEI NON SA CHI SONO IO... attenzione a come parli e a con chi parli".

5 **FORMAL VERSUS INFORMAL**

- 5.1 Teacher expands the analysis/revision of language functions (from greeting, to introducing and taking leave).
- 5.2 Students are given pictures with people meeting. They have to match them with appropriate dialogues.
- 5.3 Students are given Activity sheet 3 and order the utterances according to level of formality.
- 5.4 Teacher to explain to students how the general changes taking places in the society affect the choice of register:
- the level of informality in relations, and therefore language, is increasing and spreading from more intimate circles (the family) to other situations (school, workplace, more formal instances);
 - from a more structured class society where the social divide was huge and clearly reflected in the language, to a more flexible and "democratic" society where egalitarianism has become politically correct and distance between people tends to diminish, despite the persisting huge rich-poor divide;
 - the choice of a formal register also expresses respect for the other person, politeness.
- 5.5 Teacher explains the use of titles reminding students that generalisations always allow for a wide range of variations.
- 5.6 Teacher shows video-clips, without sound, with people meeting and greeting/introducing/taking leave. Students to discuss possible choice of utterances, make dialogues to match scenes on video.
- 5.7 Students watch video-clips with sound and compare with own suggestions.
- 5.8 Using images from videos and the explanations found on pages 29-32 in the book *Senza parole* (Diadori 1990), the teacher discusses with students the kinesic features related to greetings.
6. **"CIAO": Il successo di una parola**
- 6.1 Teacher explains the etymology of the word (from Venetian "s'ciao" = "schiavo tuo") and points out the success the word has had in recent times and its spread to other languages.
- 6.2 Students compare with "hello!" And notice the differences in use of the two greetings.

7. ROLE-PLAYING: Students bring together what they've learnt during the unit of work in role-plays

- 7.1 Students are divided into groups of two/three and given role-cards which describe the different roles, settings and speech acts to be performed. They discuss which register to use and then perform the role-play paying attention to gestures and body language.

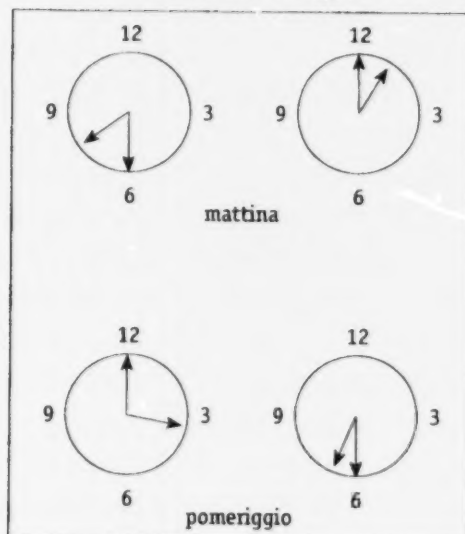
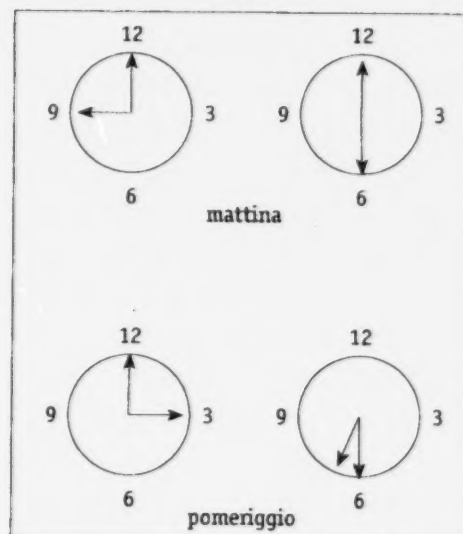
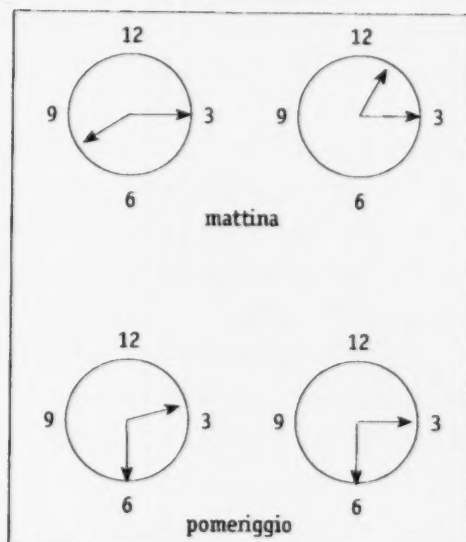
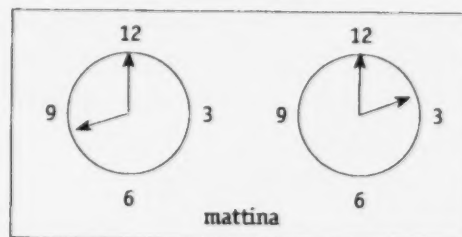
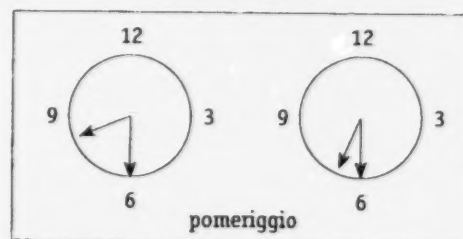
RESOURCES

- 1 Images of people meeting each other from videos: ex. *Italianissimo* (De Rome 1992) unit 1, 2
- 2 Films pictures of people meeting
- 3 Activity sheets

"QUANDO APRE?" (Activity sheet 1)

Quando apre? L'orario di apertura di negozi e servizi in Italia

Orario spezzato o orario continuato?

La Casa del Formaggio**Benetton****Banca Commerciale****Ufficio Postale****Ufficio Postale**

"A CHE ORA?" (Activity sheet 2)

Intervista 5 studenti italiani via e-mail. Scrivi le risposte nella tabella. Nell'ultima colonna scrivi le abitudini della gente in Australia.

	Interviste a studenti italiani					Nel tuo Paese
	1	2	3	4	5	
1 A che ora si alza la gente?						
2 A che ora fa colazione?						
3 A che ora comincia la scuola?						
4 A che ora aprono gli uffici?						
5 A che ora pranza la gente?						
6 A che ora tornano a casa da scuola gli studenti?						
7 A che ora chiudono gli uffici?						
8 A che ora chiudono i negozi?						
9 Fino a che ora gli adolescenti stanno fuori con gli amici?						
10 A che ora cenano le famiglie?						
11 A che ora va a dormire di solito la gente?						
12 Fino a che ora è possibile telefonare a casa di persone che non conosciamo molto bene?						

"FORMALE O INFORMALE?" (Activity sheet 3)*Riordina queste espressioni di saluto secondo il livello di formalità.*

Informale	Adatto a tutti e due i registri.	Formale
Ciao.	Salve.	Buongiorno.

Apertura di conversazione.

Ciao.
 Buongiorno.
 Buonasera.
 Salve.
 Come stai?
 Come va?
 (Sto) bene, grazie, e tu?
 (Sto) bene, grazie, e Lei (come sta)?
 Molto bene.
 (Sto) Così, così.
 Non c'è male, grazie.

Chiusura di conversazione.

Ciao.
 Arrivederci.
 ArrivederLa.
 Ci vediamo.
 A presto.

Presentazioni.

Ciao, io sono Andrea.
 Io mi chiamo Luigi, e tu come ti chiami?
 Lei come si chiama, scusi?
 Io sono il ragionier Rossi.
 Ciao Clara, questo è Sandro.
 Maria, ti presento Sara.
 Le presento la signora Piacentini.
 Piacere.
 Molto lieto/a.

ROLE-PLAYS

Examples of role-cards:

Roles:

Tonino Guerra, 14 anni, studente di 3° media alla scuola G. Mameli.

Angela Terni, 15 anni, studentessa di 1° superiore, amica di Tonino.

Professor Angelo Chiari, 45 anni, insegnante di matematica alla scuola G. Mameli.

E' l'insegnante di Tonino.

Setting:

It's 4 p.m. on a Sunday afternoon and Tonino and Angela are walking up and down via Roma in the "isola pedonale", the part of the town centre closed to traffic. They meet Tonino's teacher and stop to greet.

Scrivi i dialoghi e dramatizza l'incontro per strada tra i seguenti gruppi di persone. Tieni conto anche della gestualità.

- Antonio, Giorgia e Mirella. Tre adolescenti. Antonio e Giorgia sono amici. Mirella è amica di Giorgia, ma non conosce Antonio.
- Il signor Mattei, il signor Antoni e la moglie, Anna Carli. Il signor Mattei e il signor Antoni si conoscono per motivi di lavoro, ma non si frequentano.

Task for tertiary learners of Italian

Listening comprehension, role-play, study of Italian pragmatics & neo-realism based on *Roma città aperta* by Roberto Rossellini (based on recommended edition with Italian subtitles, script and exercises published by Lazzaretti, Turin 1997).

Linguistic level

Intermediate learners of Italian: aimed at learners who have completed at least two years' study of beginners level tertiary Italian and one year of post-year 12 tertiary Italian.

Main learning objectives of the task

To show understanding of sociocultural and pragmatic aspects related to change of register from polite to informal and vice versa in spoken Italian. To show ability to move between polite and informal register in Italian with appropriate use of pronouns, verbs, vocabulary and non-verbal forms of communication.

To understand regional differences in expression of politeness, with special emphasis on the use of "voi" in place of "lei".

To demonstrate understanding of main characteristics of neo-realist cinema.

Time frame

70 minutes is required for the listening comprehension (depending on how much time is spent on providing a cultural/historical background) and preparatory activities.

50 minutes is required for the role-play proper if the group of learners numbers no more than 12 and works in pairs on a role-play lasting around 5 minutes. The role-play should be videotaped if learners permit.

A further 20 minutes is required for discussion of each role-play.

Linguistic knowledge required

Students need to have a sound grasp of the various Italian verb tenses and types of pronouns. Preparatory activities will revise conjugation of the second person singular and plural and the third person singular (standard polite form "Lei").

Historical & cultural knowledge required

Students will have a sound knowledge of events surrounding the Fascist era, including the role of the Resistance and that of Nazi Germany in Italian affairs towards the end of World War II. A brief introduction to the main aspects of neo-realist cinema may also be required if this has not previously been studied. This may need to be revised before viewing the film segments.

Skills focussed on

Speaking, listening, pragmalinguistic issues

Type of task

This task is based on a series of tasks. These include the following:

- a listening comprehension comprising set questions;
- b research on historical background if required and previewing activities;
- c exercise to hone grammatical skills to move between polite and informal register;
- d role-play and discussion thereof.

Description of task proper (target audience = university lecturer)

- 1 Provide historical background to the film *Roma città aperta*. Check learners' knowledge of the Fascist era, the Resistance movement and the concept of Rome as an "open city", to protect it from bombardment.
- 2 Check learners' knowledge of neo-realist literature and cinema and ensure they understand the principal characteristics to assist them in understanding Rossellini's choice of characters, locations and language.
- 3 View fourth, seventh and twenty-eighth sequence of *Roma città aperta* (previously transferred to videocassette in order to avoid rewinding/fast-forwarding). If possible, encourage learners to view the entire movie, which is famous for Anna Magnani's debut as a serious film actor and the sequence of her death in the role of pregnant Pina is famous the world over as one of the most memorable moments of international cinema.
- 4 Discuss script of the above sequences and check that learners have a grasp of their content. Ask learners to rate level of formality of each sequence on a scale of 1 to 10. Learners will need to note changes of register. Discuss how they arrive at such a rating. Discuss contexts of each sequence and segments thereof. In sequence seven, which conversation segment is formal and which informal? How are the characters' relationships different? In sequence twenty-eight, how is Marina's relationship with Giorgio Manfredi different from her relationship with Francesco? Which one is likely to be her (ex) lover? Analyse the shifts of register denoted by use of appropriate pronouns & verbs.
- 5 Analyse Pina's move from the use of "voi" to the use of "Lei" in sequence four. Ask them to cite expressions used by Pina which are inappropriate in a "polite" setting, which contrast with her use of the polite local "voi" (replaced by "Lei" form in modern day Rome). What does this tell us about Pina's character? Check that learners understand the political context (possible presence of Fascist/Nazi police in Francesco's (a Resistance fighter) apartment block. Why does Pina move to use of "Lei"? Is it due to:
 - a) friendship of Manfredi with her fiancé Francesco?
 - b) the accent of a non-Roman (Manfredi's accent is Northern Italian)?
- 6 Either during the discussion of register or after the discussion, revise grammar related to speaking in third person singular (polite/*Lei*) compared with second

person singular (informal/*tu*). Contextualise this by providing examples from the sequence.

- 7 Ask learners to rewrite selected sections of the sequences based on hypothesised changed relationships between the characters. For example, in sequence four, once Pina discovers that Giorgio Manfredi is a friend and not a Fascist policeman, she could have used the "*tu*" form rather than maintain a formal register with the use of "*Lei*". Ask students to rewrite the sequence from the beginning up to and not including the entrance of Pina's son Marcello, taking note of the various grammatical and lexical changes that are required. Do the same exercise with:
 - a) the first part of sequence seven (before Francesco's entrance) by imagining that the dialogue is between friends;
 - b) the dialogue between Francesco and Don Pietro, imagining that Francesco and the priest maintain a polite register (a more likely scenario when addressing a priest in Italy);
 - b) the conversation between Marina, Giorgio and Francesco, imagining that Francesco is Marina's lover and Giorgio a person she has only just met.

Other segments of the film are suitable for such an exercise.

- 8 Learners perform one of these segments in front of the video-camera for discussion later. This does not necessarily need to be done in class. Learners should ideally be empowered with the role of filming themselves independently of the lecturer. They may also wish to send up some segments of their choice; the relationship between Marina and Ingrid is suitable. A performance with simple costumes and sets would assist greatly.
- 9 Discussion of learners' films should focus on how relationships are conveyed by use of polite/familiar register. Non-performing students could provide feedback on performances.

Notes

- 1 *"Essere consapevoli di come in lingue diverse si costruisce e mantiene un ordine e un equilibrio conversazionale e come il discorso esprima delle affinità, viceversa, delle diversità interculturali è senz'altro un elemento di estrema importanza per gli insegnanti di lingua. E' noto che gli errori pragmatici possono verificarsi a tutti i livelli di competenza e sono percepiti come particolarmente sgradevoli dai parlanti di madre lingua"* (Piazza 1995: VIII).
- 2 [...] the challenge for the next century is to begin using language to inspire inclusion rather than exclusion, conciliation rather than conflict, and peace rather than war (Miles 1995: ix).
- 3 This figure was taken from the web site of ISTAT (Italian Statistical Institute): <http://www.istat.it/Anotizie/Aaltrein/statinbrev/strares.html> in April 2002.
- 4 This figure, taken in April 2002 from the website of the Italian Ministry of Internal Affairs (www.interno.it), excludes European Union citizens.
- 5 Regional variety is undergoing a process of "homogenisation" especially at the lexical level. In his *Lessico di frequenza dell'italiano parlato* (LIP), De Mauro (1993) reports that 98,4% of the lexicon of the people interviewed in four different Italian areas was made up of standard Italian. *"L'italiano è ormai una lingua che fascia e innerva l'esperienza quotidiana, [...] umile e alta, intima e privata, pubblica e collettiva, scientifica e letteraria, di decine e decine di milioni di persone [...]".* I custodi della lingua sono ormai milioni [...]. (Nencioni, quoted in De Mauro 1994). In the same publication Sobrero remarks that cultural differences, such as gesture have also undergone a process of standardisation.
- 6 A useful exercise to explain regional differences in historical perspective is to have students analyse historical events using linguistic maps of Italy (eg. a pre-Roman map; one of the Roman Empire; one showing the division between Impero Romano d'Occidente and Oriente, to which the North/South gap can be traced, and the last two before and after Unification). The first task is to look at the maps and become aware of the variety of ethnic groups and languages in pre-Roman times, look at the other maps (with various invasions / foreign occupations) to highlight cultural and linguistic differences. Secondly to look at a map of modern Italy and see how regional differences are rooted in different historical patterns which in turn have affected economic development and created one of the richest linguistic and culturally diverse countries in Europe. These differences are noticeable at the lexical level, at the pragmatic level (terms of address, thanking etc.). Linguistic maps of Italy can be found in de Mauro (1963), De Mauro-Lodi (1979), Sabatini (1978), Devoto (1940, 1974), Gensini (1983).
- 7 *E' noto che gli anglossassoni considerino, con malcelato senso di superiorità, un tratto distintivo dei popoli "meridionali" l'accompagnare il discorso con una vivace gesticolazione. Ancora recentemente, in un volume collettaneo sul gesto, scarsamente produttivo (Bremmer, Roodenburg (1991), Peter Burke ripeteva una serie di luoghi comuni tipicamente "britannici" (the gesticulating Italian). Eppure lo*

studioso inglese non può non conoscere le annotazioni di George N. Curzon, Earl of Kedleston, sulla great manner nel parlamento londinese, così bene raffigurato da William Hogarth nelle sue famose incisioni e giunta sino ai primi dell'Ottocento[...] Lord Randolph Churchill "gesticolava abbondantemente con le mani [...]" (Kedleston 1913). Fu Lord Beaconsfield che introdusse lo stile oratorio "vittoriano", del tutto privo di gestualità (Efron 1974: 51).

- 8 The decline of external forms of deference, like the growing cult of informality and "friendliness", suggests that we are moving into a new era of gestural history, and one appropriate to a more democratic era (1991:11).
- 9 For an anthropological perspective please see Magli (1980); for a history and etymology of gestures see De Jorio (1832, 1979)
- 10 A colleague from Avellino (residing in Germany) reported to Carroli at a conference in Germany that when she returns to Avellino in shops they initially address her with *voi*. Then, thinking she is an outsider, they will then shift to *lei*, again when she says she is indeed *avellinese*, they feel comfortable using the *voi*.
- 11 Sifianou quotes an Italian study, carried out in the Seventies, that found that, paradoxically, there had been a "reversal in the use of pronouns" in Italian. Bates and Benigni (1975: 287, quoted in Sifianou 1992: 61), "found that young lower class informants used more formal forms than upper class young informants, and older informants fell in between." They also pointed out that "some of our peers have approached a virtual mirror-image of the old address system, using *tu* [informal] with professors and employers, and *Lei* [polite/formal] with sales-clerks, waiters, and the family maid." These thirty years old data seem to reflect the pragmatic "hypercorrections" of "insecure" social groups as well as the hypercorrectness perhaps of other social groups, unless we interpret addressing the maid (sic) with *Lei* as a form of distancing oneself. Thirty years later, as has been discussed, there has been a kind of "levelling" and many Italians seem to be comfortable with an "intermediate" register of Italian (Sobrero 1994).
- 12 More recently though (1999-2002) Carroli noticed that some middle class Italians teach their children to use this "routine" form of thanking.
- 13 Indeed, during the 2000 Olympic games in Australia reactions of Italian sports men did not go unnoticed: "Best Winning Celebration: Winner: Massi Rosolino. The Italian looked as though he got his celebration tip from *Life is Beautiful* star Roberto Benigni" (*Canberra Times*, Monday, September 25, 2000).

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Italian resources

- Diadori, P. (1990) *Senza parole: 100 gesti degli italiani*. Roma: Bonacci. 2nd edition.

Particularly useful for teachers because the second section is focused entirely on a range of tasks and activities for the classroom (eg. cross-cultural comparison, gesti in various texts: films, photos from newspapers, the representation of gesti in written texts). The first section is also very useful. It has an index of Italian gesti subdivided according to situation/motivation, social conventions, emotions and feelings.

- Munari, B. (1994) *Il dizionario dei gesti italiani*. Roma: AdnKronos Libri.

Concise guide in Italian, English, French, German and Japanese. Particularly useful because it lists some of the most used gesti Italians use in communication. Each gesto is accompanied by a brief commentary and by a photo. Photos are much better than drawings because they depict more clearly the gesto.

Piazza, R. (ed.) (1995) *Dietro il parlato: conversazione e interazione verbale nella classe di lingua*. Firenze: La Nuova Italia.

Excellent resource for language teachers. Part one contains an introduction by Roberta Piazza followed by a description of conversation mechanisms and a chapter on context and conversational structure by Laurie Anderson. Part two deals closely with issues related to teaching and learning oral interaction in general and with illustrations of class situations. Written in clear metalanguage in Italian.

Poggi, I. (1987) *La comunicazione verbale e non verbale*. In Poggi, I. (ed.) *Le parole nella testa: guida a un'educazione linguistica cognitivista*. Bologna: Il Mulino. 99-127.

On games as a teaching strategy:

Maroni Lumbroso M. (1989) *Giochi descritti e illustrati dai bambini d'Italia*. Milano: BUR Rizzoli.

A precious anthology of games traditionally played by the children of Italy, and told in their own words.

Mari A., Savona A. V., Straniero M.L. (1985) *Sotto la cappa del camino*. Milano: Mondadori.

A useful collection of rhymes and tongue-twisters traditionally used by Italian children in their games.

Web sites

<http://www.linguanet.org.uk/websites/resource.htm#Italian>

This web page, included in the CILT Web Site (Centre for Information on Language Teaching and Research) gives easy access to some Italian on-line newspapers and magazines plus other resources. It also provides an extensive list of Italian web sites. These Web sites can be a useful complement for language activities in the class, as they give students the opportunity to access direct information about Italy and in Italian. I used it, for example, as part of a unit about travel and tourism where the students had to develop an itinerary through Italy and write a brochure for a travel agency.

9 The teaching of culture in Japanese

Miyuki Toyoda and Shunichi Ishihara

Introduction

This chapter presents some of the teachable components of spoken language and culture that are uniquely manifested in the Japanese language. Quite a few references to Japanese language and culture have been published in English (Lebra 1976; Mizutani & Mizutani 1987). Relevant information for this book was gathered from these books and research papers on the Japanese language published both in Japan and in English speaking countries. We have also added more information that is directly relevant to Japanese language teaching in primary and secondary education based on our teaching experience. Most comparisons of Japanese and English tend to refer mainly to American English, with the exception of Obana (2000) and Neustupny (1987). Although there are some differences among Englishes spoken in North America, UK, Australia, and other regions, we have found that most of the information is applicable to all English speakers.

The following sections discussing cultural trait, kinesic and prosodic features and lexicon are written by Ishihara, and norms of interaction, pragmatic norms and spoken grammar are written by Toyoda.

Cultural traits

The uniqueness of a given language exists not only due to the difference in the linguistic structure of the language itself and in the way the language is used, but also due to the difference in the social orientation recognised in the societies in which the language is used (cf. Maynard 1989). In this section, the cultural traits uniquely manifested in the Japanese language — reflecting the ethos and the worldview of Japanese society — will be described by referring to some sub-classified components of cultural traits.

Level of verbosity and importance of silence

The level of verbosity is regarded differently according to a given culture (cf. Hymes 1974; Gardner 1966; Collett 1993; Kerbrat-Orecchioni 1994; and more). Although Mizutani (1981: 53) says "[i]t is evident that there has been a sizable increase in the number of talkative individuals recently. Especially noticeable is the decrease of very reserved children and women, who were formerly seen and not heard in Japanese life", many Japanese still believe that, if they have to use words to communicate their feelings, then they are not truly communicating. The word *ishin denshin* (heart-to-heart communication) is considered to be an ideal state of intimacy (i.e. Lebra 1976). Moreover, in Japanese culture, it is highly regarded to sense what another person wishes or expects even without exchanging words. This is the manifestation of the concept of *omoiyari* (empathy) which ranks high amongst the Japanese cultural virtues (i.e. Lebra 1976; Travis 1992). Therefore, it is considered that the level of verbosity of Japanese society is still rather low, and this view has been validated in a wide variety of literature (i.e. Benedict 1946; Doi 1962; Halloran 1969; Moloney 1954; Maraini 1965; Nakamura 1964; Nakane 1970; and many more).

Besides the generally low degree of verbosity observed in Japanese society, topics Japanese people talk about in conversations seem to be rather different from those Anglo-Australians do. At the beginning of my classes, I usually pick up some students and ask them what they did on the weekend, or last night or what they plan to do on the weekend or in the holidays, and so on. Some students mention, without hesitation, their activities with their boyfriends/girlfriends as an answer to these questions. I have an impression that Australian students more overtly discuss their partners than Japanese university students, even in such a formal setting as the classroom. Another example manifesting a difference in topics Japanese and Australians talk about can be drawn from compositions written by Australian students. The topic of one of the composition assignments that students have to do for a written Japanese course at my institution is *Jikoshokai* (self-introduction), and students usually include the introduction of their family members. In fact, in the composition, the introduction of family members often includes what seems to be very personal and private matters to Japanese people, such as divorce, unemployment, terminal disease, and so on. Barnlund (1975) conducted experiments at Japanese and American universities and found some similarities and differences in the range of topics they were prepared to talk about, and also in the range of persons to whom they were prepared to reveal their thoughts and opinions. The results show that what people prefer to talk about appears to be very similar in these two cultures. What the Japanese most prefer to discuss are matters of interest and taste, followed by opinions about public issues and attitudes toward work. For the Americans, although the order of these matters is slightly different, the same three general topics are the most discussed in American culture as well. Both cultures appear to talk least about financial matters, aspects of personality, and attitudes toward body and sex. However, the most significant difference is the level of self-disclosure across all topics and all

target persons. Japanese culture shows a significantly lower degree of self-exposure in all topics than American culture. That is, interpersonal distance in terms of verbal communication is substantially larger amongst Japanese than amongst Americans.

Reflecting the low level of verbosity in Japanese culture, silence has a significantly different meaning and function than in some other cultures. It is explained in *Illustrated living Japanese style* (1984: 173) that "[s]ome Japanese easily fall into the role of listener, nodding and saying 'Yes, Yes', rather than expressing their own opinions positively. This can mislead the speaker into believing that his listener is agreeing with him, when in fact the opposite may be true."

Politeness

Different languages employ different procedures to express politeness. In Japanese it is considerably important to sound "indirect" when one would like to speak politely (cf. Mizutani & Mizutani 1987; Honna and Hoffer 1989). There are several different procedures to make an utterance sound "indirect" in Japanese. The frequent use of ellipsis in verbal and nominal phrases as well as particles is one of the procedures to sound indirect (i.e. Martin 1975; Hinds 1980, 1981, 1982). This sort of procedure is often used, particularly when expressing one's opinion, requests, asking favours, making suggestions, and thanking. Mizutani & Mizutani (1987: 27) also argue that "leaving a part of the sentence unsaid so that the listener can supplement it is often more considerate and polite than just going ahead and completing one's own sentence." The following is an example of clausal ellipsis:

- 1 それは 違ふと おもいますけど、
 Sore-wa Chigau-to Omoimasu-kedo...
 That-TOP wrong-QTA think-but
 I think it is wrong, but...

Conjunctions, such as *kedo* (but), may appear where the logically corresponding main clause is not expressed. In the above example, the sentence ends with *kedo*, and *kedo* leaves some space where the listener is able to fill his or her own interpretation of the main clause, and consequently provides interactional options for both the speaker and the listener (Ooishi 1981). Another example is shown below:

- 2 もう 時間です から、... (行きましょうか。)
 moo jikan-desu kara... (Ikimasho-ka)
 already time-SEP because go-DAT-Q
 (Let's go) because it is time now, (shall we?)

Although a sentence ending with *kara* (because), such as example 2, and a sentence ending with *kedo*, such as example 1 seem to be incomplete sentences, the Japanese consider it good to leave room for the listener to give an opinion or judgement. In this sense, Japanese conversation is to be co-built between the speaker and the listener. Mizutani (1981: 87) says

We can think of Japanese conversation, however, as being closer to volleyball in form, with the ball being passed among six or nine team members. When

the ball is hit to a team's side of the net in volleyball, rather than one individual thinking about how to stop or return it, the ball is passed among the team members and then returned to the other side.

Even though the speaker might have strong opinions about something, he/she would avoid using direct statements, such as "I think such and such" or "my opinion is such and such". Instead, a typical Japanese person would use indirect phrases, such as *So omoimasen-ka* (Don't you think so?) or *Do okangaedesu-ka* (What do you think?). There are several sentence-ending particles in Japanese, and "ne" is one of the most frequent ones. The main function of "ne" is to solicit the listener's agreement or to encourage the listener to comment.

Furthermore, regarding politeness by means of the indirectness of speech, the Japanese prefer to use non-specific expressions, such as *gurai/hodo/bakari* (approximately) or *demo/nado* (or something like that) (cf. Mizutani & Mizutani 1987). In a situation in which one gives a suggestion, these indirect references are frequently used, as shown in 3.

- | | | | |
|---|-----------------|--------------|-------------|
| 3 | コーヒーでも | 飲みに | 行きましょうか。 |
| | Koohii-demo | nomi-ni | ikimasho-ka |
| | Coffee-Indirect | Drink-Dative | Go-VOL-Q |
- Let's go to drink coffee or something like that?

Or, when one suggests a time to meet, people often say:

- | | | | |
|---|----------------|---------------------|------------|
| 4 | あしたの | 3 時頃は | どうですか。 |
| | Ashita-no | sanji-goro-wa | doodesuka. |
| | Tomorrow-POSS. | 3 o'clock-about-TOP | how about |
- How about around three o'clock tomorrow?

The preceding description of how "indirectness" is expressed in Japanese is purely grammatical. Besides the above mentioned procedures of making utterances sound polite, learners of Japanese need to know social or psychological factors that call for politeness. Ide (1982) accounts for these factors by presenting four major rules of politeness. These rules are:

- 1 Be polite to a person of a higher social position;
- 2 Be polite to a person with power;
- 3 Be polite to an older person; and
- 4 Be polite in a formal setting.

Therefore, in teaching, it is necessary to teach not only linguistic information concerning how to create polite expressions but also sociolinguistic information about when and where people need to be polite.

Indirectness as politeness can be significantly observed in various speech acts. Detailed observations concerning this point will be presented in the section discussing pragmatic norms.

Hierarchy versus equality

It is often said that Japan is a hierarchical society (i.e. Morsbach 1973; Condon & Kurata 1974; more), and linguistic markers are frequently used to identify the relationship between the speaker and the listener. That is, the Japanese are strongly conscious of their relative relationship to the listener, and as a tool to mark this relationship, a large set of well-developed honorific forms (*keigo*) — which are used according to whether the listener is above or below one in position or social status — is embedded in the Japanese language system (Shibatani 1990; Backhouse 1993; Tsujimura 1999; etc). The usage of *keigo* is often explained in light of the higher-lower relationship and the inner-outer distinction. Since the former relationship is not as strongly regarded in Australia as in Japan, and the latter concept is unique to Japanese society, Japanese language teachers devote a large amount of time and energy to explaining the concept of *keigo* to students. As a result of Japanese language teachers' awareness of the importance of *keigo* and their devotion to *keigo* teaching, Japanese language students at least understand the concept and the importance of it, even though it takes a long time to manipulate *keigo*.

Apart from *keigo*, Japanese has a large set of addressing/referring terms, and their usage reflects the higher-lower relationship and the inner-outer distinction. This higher-lower relationship is evident in how people are addressed or referred to (i.e. Suzuki 1986). In the case between elder and younger brothers, the elder brother will be addressed or referred to as *onii-san* (older brother-san) by the younger brother, but the younger brother will be called by his first name by the elder brother, not *otooto-san* (younger brother-san). What seems to be interesting is that the same pattern also projects outside of the family, for example, the workplace. It is usual for one's superordinate to call his/her subordinates by his/her name+*san/kun*, like *Suzuki-san* or *Yamada-kun* whereas the superordinate is addressed or referred to by his/her subordinates by his/her position name, for example, *Suzuki-bucho* (Department head Suzuki) or even only *bucho*. It is not appropriate, and even rude to address a person who is superior in hierarchy by his/her name + *san*. This example indicates that name+*san* does not always show politeness. Therefore, it is not appropriate to use it even if you are a teacher as shown below (Mizutani & Mizutani 1987: 87).

- | | | | |
|---|----------------------------|-----------------|-------------|
| 5 | 私は | 大学の | 先生です。 |
| | Watashi-wa | daigaku-no | sensei-desu |
| | I-TOP | university-POSS | teacher-be |
| | I am a university teacher. | | |

Instead, one should say:

- | | | | |
|---|--------------------------------|------------|---------------|
| 6 | 私は | 大学で | 教えています。 |
| | Watashi-wa | daigaku-de | oshiete-imasu |
| | I-TOP | -LOC | teach-ing |
| | I am teaching at a university. | | |

Another phenomenon which seems to be unique to Japanese culture is the fact that once a relationship has been established between two people in Japanese society, such as the teacher-student relationship, it becomes permanent. For instance, in the teacher-student relationship, your teacher will remain "*sensei*" (teacher) even after graduation, and your speech needs to reflect this not only in terms of address but also in the degree of politeness.

Besides the higher-lower relationship, the concept of the inner-outer distinction must be considered to explain other unique usages of addressing/referring terms. When one is talking about his/her father to someone who does not belong to his/her family, it is not appropriate to refer to his/her father *otoo-san*. One should instead use the neutral form *chichi*. That is, one can refer to his/her father *otoo-san* to the family members. Again this inner-outer distinction well observed in family addressing/referring terms also applies to work situations. The following example is a telephone conversation at a company in which the caller (A) would like to talk to the department head, and the receiver (B), who is the subordinate of the department head, answers that he/she is absent.

- 7 A: 清水部長は いらっしゃいますか。
Shimizu-bucho-wa irasshaimasu-ka
Shimizu-department Head-TOP be (honorific)-QUE
Is Mr Shimizu available?
- B: 申し訳ございませんが、 清水は今 席を外しておりますが、
Moushiwakegozaimasen-ga Shimizu-wa ima sekiwohazushiteorimasu-ga.
I am sorry-but Shimizu-TOP now absent (polite)-but
I am sorry, but he is absent at moment.

In the above conversation, although the receiver (B) is a subordinate of Shimizu-bucho, he/she refers to Mr Shimizu as Shimizu because the caller (A) does not belong to the same inner group.

It is fairly easy to understand the hierarchical relationship of two or more people by listening to their conversation. It is often observed that one person changes his/her style of talking once he/she discovers that the person whom he/she is talking to is older than him/her. This implies hierarchy, and people's eagerness to find out where they are situated in the hierarchy.

Pragmatic norms

In this section, we look at various speech acts that give characteristics to the Japanese language.

Greetings

Greetings are widely taught from primary to tertiary institutions, and, therefore, it is crucial for teachers to know the norms. As mentioned in the section "Norms of interaction", greetings are shown at the beginning and the ending of each conversation. We will review some of the Japanese greetings where the usage is different from the English.

Greetings such as "*Konnichi-wa*" (Good day) and "*Ogenki desuka*" (How are you?) are some of the expressions that students of Japanese learn. However, it is wrong to assume that those Japanese greetings and their English equivalents correspond exactly to each other. It is usual in English to say "Good morning, John! How are you?" to your colleague whom you see every day. However, in the same situation, it would be rather strange to say:

- | | | |
|---|------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 8 | おはようございます。 | お元気ですか。 |
| | Ohayoo-gozaïmasu | Ogenki-desu-ka |
| | Good morning-Honorific | How are you-Polite-Question |
| | Good morning! | How are you? |

This is because "*Ogenki-desu-ka*" has a nuance that the addresser has not seen the addressee for a while. In this sense, "*Ogenki-desu-ka*" seems to be closer in meaning to "How have you been?"

Similarly, students of Japanese tend to think "*Konnichi-wa*" (Good day) exactly corresponds to "Hello" or "Hi", however, there are some functional differences between these greetings. In the same day, one might see the same person more than once. Japanese greeting expressions: "*Ohayoo-gozaïmasu*" (Good morning), "*Konnichi-wa*" (Good day), or "*Konban-wa*" (Good evening) are once-a-day greetings. It would be rather strange to say "*Konnichi-wa*" to the same person twice in the same day. The most formal way Japanese people respond in this situation is to lightly bow or nod, possibly saying "*Doomo*" (Hi).

Another interesting difference between Japanese and English greetings is in greetings to family members. Mizutani (1981: 14) says that "[it] is perfectly acceptable to say either *Ohayoo* (Good morning) or *Ohayoo-gozaïmasu* (Good morning-polite) to one's parents. But no Japanese would say *Otoosan, konnichi-wa* (Hello, Dad!) to their father who has come home from work for lunch. The use of *Konnichi-wa* only becomes possible when they are not living under the same roof." In-group and out-group distinction in the usage of greetings can be seen in "*Oyasumi-nasai*" (Good night) and "*Konban-wa*" (Good evening), as well. The former can be used to in-group as well as out-group members, but the latter is limited to out-group members. For the same reason, people in a family never say "*sayonara*" (Good-bye) to each other.

Another factor we should consider is whether the greeting is exchanged for informational purposes or just for ritual. For example, I was puzzled when asked, "How are you?" by a doctor at a clinic in Australia. I almost said, "I'm not well. That's why I'm here" because I did not know that "How are you?" is a ritual question, or that the doctor did not expect to obtain information from my answer. Conversely, foreigners who live in Japan often claim that they feel offended when asked "*Odekake desu ka?*" (Are you going out?) or "*Dochira e?*" (Where are you going?) by neighbours. They say they see this as an invasion of privacy. However, these questions are ritual and the neighbours don't expect a specific answer. The answer to this question would be "*Ee, chotto*" (lit. Yes, a little bit) or "*Chotto soko made*" (lit. Just there).

Invitations/offers

In Australian English, we ask someone's intention/preference when we offer to do something. For example, "Would you like to have a cup of coffee?" or "Would you like me to open the window?" If directly translated into Japanese, these questions become "*Koohii ga nomitai desu ka?*" (Would you like to have a cup of coffee?) and "*Mado o akete moraitai desu ka?*" (Would you like me to open the window?). Unfortunately, these sound very impolite in Japanese because Japanese tend to avoid using the form "*~tai*" (want to ~) and "*hoshii*" (want). It is regarded as impolite or indecent to ask someone's wants directly (Mizutani 1985). Alternative ways of asking one's wants are "*Koohii o o-nomini narimasuka*" (lit. Do you drink coffee?) or "*Mado o akemashoo ka?*" (Shall I open the window?). Instead of asking someone's desire, Japanese native speakers will usually ask about a person's intention or offer to do something.

"*Tsumaranai mono desu ga...*" (lit. This is a boring thing, but...) is the most frequently used phrase when Japanese give a present or souvenir. "*Nanimo arimasen ga...*" (lit. There is nothing, but...) is used when Japanese offer dinner. The particle "*ga*" (but) plays a very important role in this phrase. After the particle "*ga*", the phrase "*doozo uketotte kudasai*" (please accept this) or "*doozo meshiagatte kudasai*" (please eat this) is omitted. As the adjacency pair, the guest will say "*tondemo arimasen*" (No, not at all). In summary, the person who offers something starts the conversation in a humble way and the person who is offered politely declines the offer. You shouldn't boast or show off, but try to be humble. However, this ritual is seen less frequently between very close friends or within family.

Request

The expression for requests commonly taught in the primary and secondary classroom is "*Verb- te kudasai*" (Please do such and such). This is a very straightforward request and conveys your interest clearly and quickly. However, you should bear in mind that this could be taken as an order depending on the situation (Aoki and Okamoto 1988).

The variations of this request are as follows.

- 1 見て
Mite
Look-INF
Look
- 2 見てください
Mite-kudasai.
Look-POL
Please look.
- 3 見てくださいますか
Mite-kudasai-masen-ka
Look-please-not-Q
Would you look (at it)?
- 4 見ていただけませんか。
Mite-itadake-masen-ka
Look-for me-not-Q
Could you look?
- 5 見ていただけませんかでしょうか
Mite-itadake-masen-deshoo-ka
Look-for me-not-shall-Q
I'm wondering if you could look (at it)

From the above examples, we can see that longer utterances are more formal and polite. In addition to the expressions listed above, Japanese native speakers often use indirect requests. Indirect requests could cause misunderstanding between native speakers and non-native speakers. Native speakers are often irritated because the interlocutor does not take any action. At the same time, non-native speakers are frustrated by this roundabout way of requesting. This is because modes of requesting include a descriptive statement, a sentential hedge, or the use of incomplete sentences (Aoki and Okamoto 1988).

Acceptances/refusals

Refusals take more complicated forms than acceptances, as is the case in many other languages. Aoki and Okamoto (1988) list a summary of rules of refusals in Japanese.

- 1 Be apologetic.
- 2 Be vague.
- 3 Give reasons.
- 4 Give a warning signal for the bad news: *sore ga...* (lit. that is...), *anoo...* (well).
- 5 Try not to expose the uncomfortable partner mercilessly by using incomplete sentences.

In Japanese we explain our reason for refusal in detail. However, the feeling or expression of refusal shouldn't be overt in language (Naotsuka 1980). The interlocutor has to understand the refusal by the speaker's tone, intonation or by imagining the faded part of the utterance.

Further, Mizutani (1979) says you shouldn't say no to reverse the interlocutor's intention to avoid creating an unpleasant atmosphere, or to avoid breaking "wa" (harmony). Instead, use expressions such as *Kangaete mimasu* (I will think about it) or *Muzukashiikamo shiremasen* (It might be a bit difficult). Thus refusing a request is also presented in a roundabout way. For non-native speakers, it is necessary to know how to pick up on these cues of refusal.

Complimenting

There are three areas to consider when complimenting in Japanese: responses to complimenting, objects of compliment, and the nature of complimenting.

First, let's look at responses to complimenting in Japanese (Kumatoridani 1989). When Japanese accept a compliment, this acceptance is almost always accompanied by an expression of limitation, such as "*dake*" (only), "*~wa*" (discourse marker which shows the limitation), "*igaito*" (unexpectedly), "*chotto*" (a little bit), and so on. Another feature of acceptance is the replacement of words. If a positive word is presented, it is changed to a word which has the same meaning but has a negative connotation. For example, one might say, "*Goshujin kanrokuga arimasune*" (Your husband looks dignified) which might be met with, "*Futotteiru dakedesuyo*" (No, he is just fat). The same strategy applies in the following replacements: "*kawaii*" (cute) to "*omoshiroi*" (funny), "*gamanzuyoi*" (patient) to "*nibui*" (blunt), and so on (Terao 1996).

Example

A: そのイヤリングかわいい。

Sono iyaringu kawaii.

That earring cute

Your earrings are cute.

B: ありがとう。でも、これ、ずっと前に買ったの。

Arigatoo. Demo kore zutto mae-ni katta-no.

Thank you. But this far before-PAR buy-PAST-PAT

Thank you. But I bought it a long time ago.

As shown in the example above, Japanese tend not to show total agreement with a compliment but prefer to agree in a scaled down manner. By evaluating the speaker higher and oneself lower, this demonstrates consideration of the speaker's feelings.

Kawaguchi et al. (1996) listed some problems concerning compliments found in Japanese language teaching. One of the problems is that foreign students don't know how to react to the compliment "*Nihongo ga o-joozu desu ne.*" (Your Japanese is excellent). Kawaguchi et al. analyse the compliment according to the true

compliment/ritual compliment categories. "*Nihongo ga o-joozu desu ne*" is a kind of ritual compliment and should not be treated seriously. A response to this ritual compliment could be "*Iie, madamada desu*" (lit. No, I need more effort.).

Finally, I would like to mention what you shouldn't compliment in Japanese. These are your family members or someone who is from within your circle, and superiors. Praising own family members equals praising oneself. "Don't compliment your superior." This might sound very awkward, but a journal for Japanese language teachers published in Japan conducted a questionnaire asking "what kind of utterances by your students make you uncomfortable?" One of the answers was "*Sensei, kyoo no jugyoo wa totemo yokattadesu.*" (Teacher, today's lesson was very good). Complimenting is a kind of evaluating. It is regarded as impolite or arrogant to evaluate someone in a higher position, eg. a teacher, by someone from a lower position, eg. a student.

Thanking, apology and their responses

Although thanking and apology are different categories, the same expression "*sumimasen*" (I'm sorry) is often used both for thanking and apology in Japanese. This is because thanking and apology in Japanese are an unbroken series and form a continuum, whereas in English they are contrastive actions (Nakata 1989).

The list below includes expressions of thanking and apology:

Thanking

どうも

Doomo

(どうも) ありがとう

(Doomo) Arigatoo.

Thank you.

(どうも) ありがとう ございます

(Doomo) Arigatoo Gozaimasu

(どうも) ありがとう ございました

(Doomo) Arigatoo Gozaimashita

Thanking and apology (どうも) すみません (でした)

((Doomo) Sumimasen (deshita)

恐れ入ります

Osore-irimasu

悪い (ね)

Warui (ne)

Apology

ごめんなさい

Gomennasai

申し訳ありません (ございません)

Mooshiwake arimasen (gozaimasen)

失礼 (しました)

Shitsurei (shimashita)

Objects of thanking and apology

Thanking	The interlocutor's spontaneous assistance
Apology	The interlocutor's spontaneous assistance
	The speaker's lack of ability or inattentiveness
	The speaker's lack of ability or inattentiveness (gesture of being humble)
	When the speaker causes the interlocutor inconvenience
	Ritual greeting (gesture of being humble)
	Apology for someone else

Source: Nakata 1989

Japanese often express thanks at least twice. First, just after receiving a kindness from someone, and again when we meet that person the next time. The expression is "*kono aida wa doomo*" (Thank you for last time, Thank you for the other day.) (Naotsuka 1980).

In English we explain why we are thanking by saying, "Thank you for ..." whereas the Japanese don't explain their reason for thanking.

Japanese apologise even if they don't feel they are wrong. Apology is a kind of greeting. This means "sorry for making you feel uncomfortable" rather than "sorry for having done such and such". Apology is, in some cases, a ritual in Japanese for making things go smoothly (Naotsuka 1980).

Spoken grammar

Omission

Japanese is a highly context-oriented language compared to English (Obana 2000; Mikami 1970; Hinds 1986; Mizutani 1986). This characteristic allows many language elements to be omitted. You don't have to speak in full sentences, if both the speaker and the interlocutor know the context. Obvious information is normally omitted. If someone speaks in a full sentence with the subject, the object(s) and the predicate, it sounds redundant and unnatural. Moreover, it may create an unwanted speech act in some cases if you add the subject, the object or the predicate. Prosodic features, such as rising tone, also convey the speaker's intention or feeling.

Example 1

Q こちらへは いつ いらっしゃったんですか。

Kochira-e-wa itsu irasshatta-n desu ka.

Here-to-TOP when come (honorific) part-emphasis copula Q.

When did you come here?

A-1 先週の日曜日に来ました。

Senshuu no nichiyooobi ni kimashita.

Last week part. Sunday on came

(I) came (here) last Sunday.

A-2 私は先週の日曜日にここへ来ました。

Watashi wa senshuu no nichiyooobi ni koko e kimashita.

I TOP last week part. Sunday on here to came.

I came here last Sunday.

Both A1 and A2 convey the same meaning in English. Whereas A1 sounds natural in Japanese, A2 contains unnecessary information and sounds redundant. In A2, "watashi wa" (I) could imply that someone else came on a different day by giving emphasis on "I".

The A wa B *desu/masu* (A is B or A does B) pattern is rarely used in spoken language. The subject, especially the first person pronoun *watashi*, is often omitted. If the first person pronoun appears too often, it sounds as if the speaker is showing off and pressuring the interlocutor (Mizutani 1985:35). In the case of the second and the third person pronouns, they are also omitted when the subject is obvious in the context. We will come back to the pronoun issue in more detail later.

Omission is also applied to particles in informal conversation, although not all the particles can be omitted.

Topic, agent of the action	は・が wa / ga	○
Location	に ni	△*
Direction	へ・に e / ni	○
Medium, method	で de	×
Dative (indirect object)	に ni	×
Accusative (direct object)	を o	○
Time	に ni	×
Recipient	から・に kara/ni	×

As for a particle indicating location, "*X wa Y ni aru*" (X is in/at Y) it usually becomes "*Y*" only as a result of omission.

- じしょ、どこ ？？じしょ、どこ ある。
 jisho doko jisho doko aru
 dictionary where dictionary where BE

Where is the dictionary? Where is the dictionary?

- つくえの上。 ？？つくえの上 ある。
 tsukue no ue tsukue no ue aru
 on the desk

According to research, spoken Japanese does not end with *masu* or *desu*, but ends with *~kedo*, *~keredomo*, *~kara*, *~te* which indicate the rest of the utterance. *Masu* or *desu* are often accompanied with particles such as *ne*, *yo* or *ga* (Mizutani 1985).

Example

これ、すこしなんですけど...

Kore sukoshi nandesu kedo...

This a little bit pred.emphasis but...

This is a little bit ...but (please accept this)

As characteristic of informal conversation, the utterance is relatively short, and is often accompanied with particles. Also, inversions are often used (Mizutani 1985).

Example

今、ちょっと、いい？

Ima chotto ii?

Now a little bit all right?

Is it OK to talk to you now? Could you spare time for me now?

Mizutani (1979) says that Japanese native speakers often know what's coming at the end of the speaker's utterance. In spoken language, the importance of the end of the utterance is relatively low whereas the beginning of the utterance has more important role (Mizutani 1979). Native speakers of Japanese thus predict the rest of the utterance even though the Japanese language has the conclusion at the end of the utterance. How then can native speakers of Japanese predict the rest of the utterance? They do this by unconsciously reconstructing the omitted phrase.

Personal pronouns

When you use the second person pronoun to clarify to whom you are talking, what you have to bear in mind is "*anata*" is not equivalent to the English "*you*". "*Anata*" shouldn't be used to superiors. The third person pronouns "*kare*" (he) and "*kanojo*" (she) are not equivalent to the English he/she either. These words were introduced during the Meiji period when western concepts were introduced into Japan. Nowadays, "*kare*" and "*kanojo*" have different connotations, and translate as boyfriend and girlfriend, respectively. "*Kare*" and "*kanojo*" need to be used carefully, as they aren't

considered polite. So, the safest way of referring to someone is to use his/her name if you know it. If you don't know it, just omit the subject.

Style

In Japanese, we use three levels of language: plain form, *desu/masu* form and *keigo*, honorific.

Example - plain (casual/informal) form

何食べる。

Nani taberu?

What eat?

What would you like to have?

Example - *desu/masu*(polite/formal) form

何を食べますか。

Nani o tabemasu ka?

What-ACC-eat-Q

What would you like to have?

Example - *keigo*(honorifics/formal)

何を召し上がりますか。

Nani o meshiagarimasu ka?

What-ACC-eat-HON-Q

What would you like to have?

There is an ongoing debate among teachers of Japanese about whether they should teach the plain form or the *desu/masu* form in primary school. In daily conversation, plain form is used for conversations among family and friends, so the acquisition of the plain form is crucial in order to speak Japanese naturally, especially for young learners. Moreover, as the plain form is shorter and easier to remember, the introduction of Japanese expression using the plain form is apparently an easy way of learning Japanese for young learners. It is true that there is an advantage to the plain form from a pedagogical point of view. However, teaching only the plain form in primary schools may result in producing impolite utterances by children toward adults. In Japan, using the plain form in this situation is not appropriate. Children learn how to speak to adults including their teachers, by grade 3 or 4.

On the other hand, the *desu/masu* form is polite enough for speaking to anybody. By using this form, you can demonstrate politeness even if you aren't using highly sophisticated *keigo*. At the same time, using the *desu/masu* form to family and friends might sound unnatural and make the interlocutor feel distant from the speaker. Many foreigners in Japan claim that they have difficulty communicating with friends because they are taught only the *desu/masu* form in beginner's classes in Japanese language schools. The vast majority of Japanese language classes in the world start by teaching the *desu/masu* form, which is a reflection of Japanese society where it is more important to be polite than to be friendly.

Norms of interaction

Opening and closing

Most conversations start and end with greetings. This is not only for practical purposes but also for showing politeness (Neustupny 1987). This is similar to Australian English, although the difference is in what kind of greeting is used.

Greetings at the beginning of a conversation are determined by whether you are talking to someone whom you don't know, or to an acquaintance. Japanese people normally don't talk to anyone they don't know on the street or in other public places. So you have to show clearly why you are talking to him or her. If you want to talk to someone you don't know on the street, to ask for information, you have to start with "*Sumimasen, chotto o-ukagai shitai-n desu ga*" (Excuse me, I would like to ask you something). If you start with "*Konnichi wa*" (Hello), the person will look suspiciously at you. The same manner is applicable to shop clerks, information centres, and so on. The appropriate closing in these cases is "*Arigatoo gozaimashita*" (Thank you very much).

As well as thanking, "*yoroshiku onegai shimasu*" is also widely used, especially at the end of a request.

Discourse markers

Learners of Japanese often claim that they can't tell when negotiation between Japanese native speakers reaches agreement. This is probably because they have missed the signals of agreement which play a very important role in Japanese conversation. "*Ja(a)*" (if so, in that case) is most frequently used as a discourse marker.

Feedback tokens

Aizuchi, which is often called "back channel" in English, is one characteristic of spoken Japanese. Back channel is a phenomenon observed in many languages, however, it is reported that *aizuchi*, back channels, are more frequently produced in Japanese conversation than English (Horiguchi 1997; Mukai 1999).

Aizuchi can be divided into two main functions: acknowledgement and evaluation (Mukai 1999). As *aizuchi* is a signal that the listener is listening to the speaker's utterance, Japanese native speakers say that they consider a conversation without *aizuchi* to be uncomfortable. Especially in telephone conversations, verbal back channel behaviour is extremely important as it provides acknowledgement that the listener has heard the speaker and is a signal that the speaker may continue talking. When the speaker does not recognise clear back channel behaviour over the phone, the speaker may think there is something wrong with the telephone connection, or that the listener cannot hear the speaker clearly.

Learners and teachers of Japanese will find that acquisition of *aizuchi* for evaluation is more difficult than the one for simple acknowledgement. Mukai (1999)

reported that non-native speakers use fewer evaluation back channels when compared to native speakers. This finding proves the hypothesis above.

The following are suggestions for classroom activities to teach *aizuchi*, graded by difficulty.

1 *Aizuchi* as a simple acknowledgement

"*Soo desu ka*" is the most commonly used *aizuchi* and the easiest to acquire. The intonation should not be a rising tone that may suggest doubt.

Task 1

Student A is assigned to be the speaker and s/he has to prepare a short narrative. Student B is assigned to be the listener. While listening to the speaker, the listener says "*Soo desu ka*" or "*Soo*" for informal conversation. The listener has to find the most appropriate point to insert *aizuchi* according to the content.

"*Soo desu ne*" may be used alternatively. Originally the end particle "*ne*" shows the agreement. However "*Soo desu ne*" sometimes does not necessarily mean, "Yes, I do think so." This functions in the same way as "*Hai*" or "*Ee*", as a simple acknowledgement of listening.

Task 2

A full or partial repeat of the speaker's utterance sometimes plays the same role as "*Soo desu ka*" or "*Hai*". Partial repetition should be a chunk of a grammatically meaningful unit, and the most important part of the utterance for the listener is repeated.

2 *Aizuchi* as an evaluation

To make the conversation more vivid, comments such as "*Sugoi desu ne*" (That's great), "*Yokatta desu ne*" (That's good), "*Subarashii desu ne*" (That's wonderful), "*Sore wa ikemasen ne*" (That's not good) and "*Sore wa zannen deshita ne*" (That's a shame) could be used as *aizuchi*.

Task 3

The student who plays the speaker role prepares a short narrative, eg. talking about her/ his experience during the holidays. The student who plays the listener shows back channel behaviour while s/he is listening. Encourage the listener to add evaluative comments. The conversation is tape-recorded or video-taped. Students listen or view the recorded tape and check the listener's back channel behaviour.

Task 4

One student role-plays an interviewer, and the other role-plays an interviewee. The student/interviewer prepares an interview. While interviewing, the interviewer tries to demonstrate back channel behaviour as much as possible. Encourage the interviewer to add evaluative comments. The conversation is tape-recorded or video-taped. Students listen or view the recorded tape and check the listener's back channel behaviour.

Kinesic and prosodic features

Kinesic features

Although foreign observers, such as Benedict (1946), Caudill & Weinstein (1969) and Caudill & Plath (1966) remarked on the physical closeness of the Japanese mother and her child — not only in terms of physical proximity but also actual body contact — this physical closeness gradually disappears as the child grows up. I remember sleeping in the same bed with my mother as a child, but after reaching adolescence, I avoided physical contact with her. Even when I return to Japan after many years of absence, although my family of course gives me a warm welcome, it is not shown through physical contact but through verbal expression. It is often said that the Japanese maintain more distance between each other when they talk than many English-speaking people do. Mizutani & Mizutani (1987: 57) say that "Students usually do not stand very close to their teachers, and young workers refrain from coming too close to their bosses. And the distance is larger when the two persons are of the opposite sex." Barnlund (1975) states that Americans seem to engage in approximately twice as much bodily contact as do Japanese. The data collected by Luk (1979) is also consistent with the data discussed by Barnlund (1975) that touching across sex lines is much less frequent than between peer members of the same sex, and Japanese women engage in much more touching of peers than Japanese men do. The survey by Barnlund (1975) also reports the same tendency — that the physical contact with peers is greater than with parents for both Japanese and Americans. What's interesting is that the Japanese interact significantly less with their fathers than with other persons. That is, Japanese are more isolated from their fathers in terms of physical contact.

Although Japanese do not use large gestures like Anglo-Australians use, appropriate body language is considered to be very important to show politeness. The most significant body language the Japanese show is bowing. Almost as soon as a foreigner arrives in Japan, he/she acquires the custom of bowing for greeting, apologising, and thanking. Although it tends to be neglected in Japanese language classes, bowing is used in wider situations than greeting, apologising, and thanking. Besides these situations, Mizutani & Mizutani (1987: 54-55) list three more situations in which bowing should be accompanied to indicate politeness. These are: when making a request, when offering things, and when offering sympathy for some misfortune. When one is making a request, he/she usually bows while saying:

- 9 すみませんが、
Sumimasen-ga,,,
Excuse me-but...
I am sorry for troubling you, but...

One usually bows when offering someone something, for example, serving *ocha* to someone while saying something like this:

10 Tsumaranai mon-desu-ga...

Trifling thin-be-but

This is not much, but...

11 Kon tabi-wa tonda koto-de-gozaimashita

This time-TOP terrible thing-be-polite

I am very sorry to hear it.

Prosodic features

Intonation not only changes the meaning of a sentence, but also provides para-linguistic information such as emotion. As mentioned above, the Japanese language is well equipped to show different levels of politeness. However, even if one wants to show politeness to someone grammatically, if he/she uses the wrong intonation, the listener receives the wrong impression from the person. Mizutani & Mizutani (1987: 30) state that a hesitant tone is an important aspect of being polite. They say, "Expressing one's reserve by sounding hesitant is essential to being polite, perhaps even more so than using polite expressions. Sounding hesitant means that the speaker proceeds with his or her speech while waiting for the listener's reactions rather than going on without paying any heed to the listener's feelings."

Lexicon

Different levels of conversation exist more clearly in Japanese than in English. Reflecting this aspect, the types of vocabulary used in conversation differ depending on the level of conversation.

Japanese vocabulary is generally classified into three different types: *wago*, "Japanese words", *kango*, "Chinese words", and *gairaigo*, "foreign words" (cf. Shibatani 1990). The first type is self-explanatory — they are Japanese original lexicons. The second type includes loan words of Chinese origin. All other loan words from European countries and other Asian countries are classified as *gairaigo* "foreign words". Learners of the Japanese language find it hard to use these vocabularies differently depending on the context or situation. In an example, quoted from Sasaki (1994: 191), there are three words which have the same semantic information of cancelling: *torikesu* (Japanese origin), *kaiyakusuru* (Chinese origin), and *kyanserusuru* (foreign word). However, it is rare to hear Japanese speak as follows:

12 昨日予約した 切符を 解約したいんですが、

Kinoo yoyaku-shita kippu-wo **kaiyaku**-shitaindesu-ga

Yesterday book-PAST ticket-OBJ cancel-want-but

I would like to cancel the train ticket I booked yesterday.

When one wants to cancel life insurance, for example, he/she would not say:

- 13 生命保険を キャンセルしたいんですが、
 Seimeihoken-wo **kyanseru**-shitain-desu-ga,
 'life insurance-OB3 cancel-want-polite-but
 I would like to cancel the life insurance.

There is a general tendency for Chinese origin words to be used more often in formal and written texts, and Japanese origin and foreign words in neutral and spoken situations (i.e. Ide 1982; Miura & McGloin; Ide 1982). It is useful for learners of Japanese to know that colloquial words are predominantly native whereas, written Japanese, which has a much larger vocabulary, is generally characterised by a higher proportion of *kango* (Chinese words) (cf. Kokuritsu Kokugo Kenkyujo 1962-1964). Thus, *wago* (Japanese words), which are neutral in the stylistic sense, usually have a *kango* (Chinese words) counterpart which sound bookish if used in a spoken situation. Therefore, it is necessary to teach learners how to use them differently.

Besides having meanings, words have stylistic properties with respect to the type of environment when used appropriately. In this respect, it can be said that many words are neutral while others are restricted by various factors, such as whether they are spoken or written, the level of formality, gender, and so on. The distinctive usage between the spoken and written context, not only in grammatical style but also in vocabulary, is significant in Japanese. Although it depends on whom you are talking to, certain vocabulary is appropriate only in spoken situations, such as slang or abbreviated forms of words, or vice-versa. The following list contains a contrast between formal and neutral words.

Neutral	Formal	English
<i>kyo</i>	<i>konnichi, honjitsu</i>	today
<i>asita</i>	<i>myoonichi</i>	tomorrow
<i>kondo</i>	<i>konotabi</i>	this time
<i>doko</i>	<i>dochira</i>	where, which

Table 1: Neutral vocabularies and their corresponding formal versions.

Polite vocabulary is often used to make utterances polite when referring to someone else's family or belongings. The polite prefix "o" is usually used to change a default lexicon into the corresponding polite version. For example, "*tenki*" (weather) changes to "*o-tenki*". It is generally said that females use the "o" prefix more frequently than males even in a familiar speech environment. Accordingly, women's speech is often considered to be more polite than men's (i.e. Brown 1980; Zimin 1981), and it's been reported that the ratio of the occurrence of the honorific in women's speech is higher than in men's speech (i.e. Peng et al. 1981). This tendency becomes more significant as age increases.

Some vocabulary items are associated with male or female users. As in grammar, vocabulary differences based on gender mainly appear in the spoken language. There are some words which are used only by males, particularly in vulgar or robust situations. Although some words are limited to females in usage, there are not as many as those limited to males. The following table contains some of the vulgar and robust expressions men would use.

	Robust	Neutral	English
Verbs	<i>kuu</i>	<i>taberu</i>	to eat
Nouns	<i>meshi</i>	<i>gohan, shokuji</i>	meals
	<i>hara</i>	<i>onaka</i>	stomach
Adjective	<i>umai</i>	<i>aishii</i>	delicious
	<i>dekkai</i>	<i>ookii</i>	big

Table 2: Neutral expressions and corresponding robust expressions.

There are some profanities or swear words in the Japanese language, but not as many as English. However, there is a clear gender difference in usage. Although in Anglo-Australian culture, females equally use profanities or swear words as males, it is extremely rare to hear Japanese females swear, and this is truer as women age. My female colleagues have said that they had never sworn, or even used words like *Kuso* (Shit!) or *Chikusho* (Damn!).

The differences in politeness between men's and women's speech depend on the situation. There is often little difference between men's and women's speech in impersonal polite speech (i.e. Mizutani & Mizutani 1987). Mizutani & Mizutani (1987) say that "women are allowed to use emotional expressions more freely than men". For instance, although adjectives such as *suteki* (marvelous) and *kawaii* (cute) are used by both men and women, when a man praises something by saying *ii-ne* (good), a woman may use more emphatic words like *suteki* or *kawaii*.

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Language educators know that culture is vitally important in language teaching. All policies and curriculum statements for languages reinforce the importance of culture. But what is the most effective way to teach culture? Is there a general culture teaching approach, or are language specific approaches preferable? How can we teach culture in ways that do not stereotype communities? And what of cultural dimensions of language and communication, as distinct from the specific culture that surrounds a particular language?

Because culture in language is variable and context dependent, and culture itself is not static, it is sometimes argued that culture is not teachable, and that attempts to render implicit expressions of culture accessible lead to stereotypical representations.

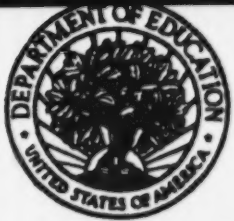
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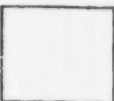


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